

The Collected Works of Spinoza

THE
Collected Works
OF
SPINOZA



Edited and Translated by
Edwin Curley

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SOME WILL REMIND US of the saying “while the Romans deliberate, Saguntum is lost.” On the other hand, when the few decide everything, simply on the basis of their own affects, freedom and the common good are lost. For human wits are too sluggish to penetrate everything right away. But by asking advice, listening, and arguing, they’re sharpened. When people try all means, in the end they find ways to the things they want which everyone approves, and no one had ever thought of before.

—SPINOZA, *POLITICAL TREATISE*, IX, 14

Contents

GENERAL PREFACE, ix
SHORT TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS, xix

Letters: September 1665–September 1669

EDITORIAL PREFACE, 3
LETTERS 29–41, 10

A Critique of Theology and Politics

EDITORIAL PREFACE, 45
THEOLOGICAL-POLITICAL TREATISE, 65

Letters: January 1671–Late 1676

EDITORIAL PREFACE, 357
LETTERS 42–84, 374

Designs for Stable States

EDITORIAL PREFACE, 491
POLITICAL TREATISE, 503

Glossary-Index

PREFACE, 607
GLOSSARY, 613
LATIN-DUTCH-ENGLISH INDEX, 666
INDEX OF BIBLICAL AND TALMUDIC REFERENCES, 713
INDEX OF PROPER NAMES, 721

WORKS CITED, 725
CORRELATION OF THE ALM
AND BRUDER PARAGRAPH NUMBERS (TTP), 767

General Preface

I'VE BEEN AT WORK on this translation for a long time now. It's been forty-five years since I began on Volume I, and nearly thirty years since I started on this second, final, volume. It's time, at long last, to put an end to this project, at least for a while, and to make the results of my work available to whoever is interested.

The basic goals of my edition remain what they were in 1969. I believed then, and still believe, that a truly satisfactory edition of Spinoza's works ought:

first, to provide translations which are as accurate as possible, which show good judgment, when something more than accuracy is required, which are as clear and readable as fidelity to the text will allow, and which leave interpretation to the commentators, so far as this is possible;

second, to base those translations on the best available critical editions of the original texts;

third, to make the edition as comprehensive as possible, so that readers of Spinoza will have conveniently available all the primary data for the interpretation of his philosophy;

fourth, to offer translations which are all by the same hand, in hopes of achieving the kind of consistency in the treatment of important terms which makes it easier to appreciate their importance and meaning, to compare passages in different works treating the same topic, and to form judgments about the possible evolution of Spinoza's thought;

fifth, to arrange the texts in chronological order, so far as this can reasonably be determined, to make it easier to grasp the development of Spinoza's thought in those areas where it changed over the course of his philosophical career; and

finally, to supply the texts with editorial aids to assist in understanding of Spinoza's work: prefaces, annotation, indices, and, in a limited way, commentary.

The response to Volume I has generally been quite gratifying. A number of reviewers seemed to think I had achieved my goals. Some—most notably, Jonathan Bennett¹—combined high praise with really helpful criticism. Many authors writing about Spinoza in English seem

1. In the *Philosophical Review* 96 (1987): 306–11.

GENERAL PREFACE

to have wanted to use my translations where they could, citing other translations only when the work was one I hadn't done yet. Some expressed a certain impatience for the completion of Volume II. No author could reasonably wish for more.

Still, I have felt that in Volume II I could, and should, do better. Bennett's main criticism was that in my quest for fidelity I hadn't given enough weight to readability. I didn't agree with all his examples, but I did realize that he had a point, one I have come to appreciate more and more as I have reviewed my successive drafts with a view to improving their style. In this volume I have tried very hard to make sure that my translations are as readable as I can make them without sacrificing my other goals.

In this effort Bennett has been extraordinarily helpful. After he retired from teaching, believing students often had unnecessary difficulty understanding the classic texts in early modern philosophy, he embarked on the project of making them "easier to read while leaving intact the main arguments, doctrines, and lines of thought."² When he decided that the *Theological-Political Treatise* (TTP) should be included in this collection, he asked if he could use my draft translation to guide him. I was happy to agree. I had some reservations about encouraging students to read abridged versions of these texts, in what was sometimes more a paraphrase than a translation. But I felt he was providing a great service to the profession. No one will agree with everything Bennett does. However, he was addressing a real problem in a genuinely constructive way. And generally I have tried to cooperate with other scholars by sharing my draft translations with those who asked to use them in their teaching or research. Given the length of time it was taking me to produce a version I was content to publish in the more usual way, this seemed the least I could do.

In this case circulating my draft led to extremely valuable feedback. Seeing what Bennett did with my draft of the TTP to make it more readable—and the problems which his thoughts about the text sometimes alerted me to—gave me many ideas about how I could improve my translations. Some of his devices for achieving readability may be irrelevant or not open to a translator. But others are both relevant and useful to any translator.³ More recently Bennett decided to tackle

2. For the current state of this ambitious project, go to <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com>.

3. For the general principles of Bennett's work, see <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/how.html>. Someone translating Spinoza from Latin or Dutch need not worry about updating the language in the way an editor of Hobbes might. And a translator will not consider it proper to omit passages which don't "earn their keep." But striving

GENERAL PREFACE

Spinoza's correspondence, and asked if he could use my draft translations of that part of the corpus. I agreed again, this time asking him to give me specific comments on any problems he encountered in my drafts. I could not have asked for a better collaborator.

There are several other ways in which I hope this volume will improve on its predecessor. In producing Volume I, I worked without the aid of a computer. For Volume II, I've had a series of ever-improving computers to use. They have helped me write and revise my translations, print out drafts without having to worry that the typing process will introduce new errors, circulate drafts to other scholars, do word searches in the texts—not only in the English of the translation but also in the Latin of the text translated—record data about words which require an entry in the Glossary-Index, consult online reference works through my university library, email other scholars, order books for my personal library, and, lately, download books which once would have required a trip to a distant library. I have been amazed, and very grateful, to see how much has become available on the Internet. The computer has changed my life, much for the better, on the whole. It has its downside: it has provided me with more distractions than I needed, and tempted me to pursue inquiries which were probably not always necessary. But on the whole it has been a great blessing.

One issue raised by some readers of Vol. I was whether my translations were too interpretive. One thought they were. Another praised them for keeping the effects of my overall interpretation to a minimum.⁴ They were interpretive, of course; they still are. In my view *every translation is inevitably often an interpretation of its text*. It must be. You can try to deal with this fact by adding footnotes explaining that others might render the text differently, or using a device like the Glossary-Index to discuss your choices. But it does none of us any good to pretend that a translator can avoid interpretation.

When it seemed necessary, I did add footnotes calling attention to some of the translations I thought might be particularly contentious.⁵ But if you did this as often as the situation might call for it, you would have intolerably many footnotes. In the languages of the texts translated here—in every language I know anything about—many terms are ambiguous. So the translator must constantly make choices: which

for “less convoluted syntax and shorter sentences, numbering of points, indenting of passages that are helped by such a display”—these all seem both legitimate and helpful. To this list I would add the breaking up of long paragraphs into more manageable and coherent units of thought.

4. Cf. Rice 1990 with Doniela 1987.

5. For example, in E I D4, I D6, I D8Exp., II P13S, III P6, etc.

GENERAL PREFACE

of the various possible translations of this term seems likely to best express Spinoza's meaning? I take this to be a question of trying to decide what English term Spinoza would have chosen if he had been writing in our language and had been fluent in twentieth- or twenty-first-century English. This question is wildly hypothetical, of course. Still, there *may* be a right answer to it. That is, there may be a fact of the matter about what choice Spinoza would have made under those conditions.⁶ Moreover, *sometimes*, when the stars are properly aligned, we can be reasonably confident that we *know* what the answer is.⁷

Here's an easy case. The Latin noun *liberi* can mean either children in general or only sons. When Spinoza is presenting his recommended constitution for a non-tyrannical monarchy, he writes that "If the king has had a number of *liberi*, the eldest should succeed by right" (TP vi, 37). In spite of the ambiguity of *liberi*, no competent, careful reader of the text will be in any doubt about Spinoza's meaning. It's as certain as can be that Spinoza meant to refer only to male children. Two sentences further on he writes: *filias in haereditatem imperii venire, nulla ratione concedendum*, as I would put it, "under no circumstances should daughters be permitted to inherit the rule." Even if we did not have that sentence, there are, as Spinoza's admirers may regret, a number of other passages which would guide us to the right answer, passages where Spinoza expresses his doubts about the ability of women to rule well.

Most cases aren't that easy. Here's one that's more difficult. The Latin term *saeculum* can refer to periods of time of very different lengths: a generation, a century, an age, or simply a long period of indefinite duration. The different possible ways of translating *saeculum* yield significantly different meanings for the passages in which it occurs. In Chapter 8 of the TTP Spinoza says that the author of the Pentateuch lived many *saecula* after Moses. Does he mean that the author lived many generations after Moses, or many centuries? (To simplify I focus on what seem to be the two most salient possibilities.) We know from things Spinoza says later in the TTP that he thought that author lived many centuries later. But did he intend to *say* that as early as §§17 and 20 of Chapter 8? I don't think so. So in those two passages in Chapter 8 I've translated *saeculum* as "generation."

6. Or there may not. A Spinoza fluent in English might still have found no suitable equivalent in English for a particular term in Latin or Dutch. It might be that there is no English term which has quite the right connotations, or which matches the ambiguity of a given Latin or Dutch term. It might be that Spinoza wished to take advantage of that ambiguity. It may also be that he used a particular term without giving any thought to its ambiguity.

7. I've discussed the general issues, using Hobbes as my example, in Curley 1994.

GENERAL PREFACE

A more difficult case, but not an impossible one. I can give reasons for the choice I made.⁸ It's not purely arbitrary. Still, it illustrates the point that a translator must frequently use his (or her)⁹ best judgment, fallible though that judgment must be. Different translators will make different judgments. So I repeat, with a modest qualification: *every translation of an extended piece of serious philosophical writing must often be an interpretation of the text*. No one should be under any illusions about that necessity, or the difficulty of the task.

A few years ago Lydia Davis, widely admired, not only for her short stories, but also for her translations of French literature, stated the challenge of translation well:

A single work involves often hundreds of thousands of minute decisions. Many are inevitably compromises. The ideal translation would result in an English that perfectly replicated the original and at the same time read with as much natural vigor as though it had been born in English. But in reality the finished translation is likely to be more uneven—now eloquent, now pedestrian, now a perfect replication, now a little false to the original in meaning or rhythm or syntax or level of diction. A careful weighing of the many choices involved can nevertheless result in a wonderful translation. But great patience and of course great skill in writing are essential, not to speak of a good ear and a deep understanding of the original text.¹⁰

It may be reckless to invite judgment by such a standard. And I must confess that I have not tried to meet it in every respect. There's no way you can write an English which speaks as simply and directly to the reader as I would like to do, while at the same time respecting Spinoza's (and his century's) tolerance for long, complex sentences, and long, complex paragraphs. My highest priority is to be as true to the original in meaning as I can. I do not give nearly as much weight to rhythm or syntax or level of diction. I am translating philosophy, not literature.

8. See the Glossary entry AGE, CENTURY, GENERATION.

9. I dislike this awkward way of avoiding the sexism of English pronouns, and try to use it sparingly, preferring, when I am speaking for myself, to alternate more or less randomly between masculine and feminine pronouns. In translating Spinoza, however, I think it would be a mistake to give the impression that he possessed our sensitivities in these matters.

10. "Up Front: Lydia Davis," *New York Times*, June 9, 2011, Book Review section, p. 4. While I was writing this preface, Claire Messud gave us some elegant examples of these "minute decisions" in her review of Sandra Smith's new translation of Camus' *L'Étranger* in the *New York Review of Books*, June 5, 2014.

GENERAL PREFACE

Nevertheless, it has seemed to me that I could, to some significant extent, reduce the difficulties inherent in translation by giving the reader a systematic sense of the most important problems I faced in the works translated, of what the options seemed to be, and why I made the choices I did. The main purpose of the Glossary-Index is to try to be clear, without being tedious, about those choices and why I made them. I also share information about the decisions Spinoza's contemporary Dutch translators made, which I find often helpful in the interpretation of the text.¹¹

The Glossary is another area where I think this volume improves on its predecessor. In preparing Volume I, I added the Glossary at a fairly late stage of my work, as I came to appreciate how difficult it would be for readers without much (or any) Latin or Dutch to use an index constructed on the basis of terms in the original languages. Adding the Glossary late in the process meant that I didn't fully exploit its possibilities. The notes I wrote explaining my choices and acknowledging the different choices other translators had made were often very short, and not, I now think, as reflective or well argued as they might have been. In preparing Volume II, I've had the advantage of knowing from the start that I intended to create a substantial section explaining my treatment of problematic terms, of being able to use the computer to quickly survey the various contexts in which the terms occurred, and of fine-tuning the draft entries as I went along, and as I reflected on the meaning of the terms in their various occurrences. This has its downside, too: it has made it much easier to agonize endlessly about getting it, if not right, then as good as I could make it. But I think it has made the Glossary much more useful.

In constructing the Glossary-Index this time, I've had two immense advantages I did not have when I was constructing the similar tool for Vol. I. First, as indicated, I've had all the Latin texts available on disk. I'm grateful to Mark Rooks for the initial scanning of those texts and to Frédéric Béliet, Debra Nails, and William Levitan for proofreading the scans. Having these texts available has made searching for occurrences much easier and much more reliable. It can still be time-consuming

11. Sometimes this seems to me quite important. Consider the term *hieroglyphicum*, which occurs infrequently, but is crucial in Strauss's reading of Spinoza. In this case I think Glazemaker's renderings are very illuminating. See the Glossary entry S (OBSCURE). Glazemaker was no doubt fallible. All of us are. And in producing the *Nagelate schriften* he seems to have been working under intense time pressure. But he was an experienced and intelligent translator of seventeenth-century philosophical Latin, whose views deserve our consideration and respect. For a balanced appreciation of his strengths and weaknesses, see Akkerman 1984.

GENERAL PREFACE

and tedious. But it's not impossibly so. Since one of my goals has been to achieve as much consistency as possible in the treatment of key terms, and to make my decisions in the light of a comprehensive view of Spinoza's usage, this was a great help.

Second, Minna Koivuniemi patiently and scrupulously checked a late draft of the index for occurrences I might have failed to record, false positives, and misinformation I might have given about the terms I used to translate a given term. Her assistance has saved me a lot of time, greatly improved the accuracy of the index, and made me indebted to her far beyond what I could ever hope to repay. This portion of the work must now contain far fewer mistakes than it would have without her help. (It is still the product of human effort, so it can't possibly be error-free.) Also, because Minna knows Spinoza and the literature on him very well, she was able to give me valuable feedback on some of the Glossary entries.

Some years ago I published a pair of essays which contained in their titles the phrase "notes on a neglected masterpiece" (Curley 1990b, 1994). This was a reference to the principal work in this volume, Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*, which I believed had been seriously neglected by English-language commentators, but which I also believed deserved the label "masterpiece" as much as the better-known *Ethics* did. There are few works in the history of philosophy which can claim to have laid the foundations for a whole new discipline, as the TTP did for the science of biblical interpretation.¹² Add to that the fact that the TTP is also the first work by a major philosopher in the Western tradition to defend democracy as the most natural form of government, which best preserves the freedom and equality of the state of nature. Add further the facts that the TTP's powerful critique of revealed religion made a major contribution to the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century,¹³ and that it offers a forceful defense of freedom of thought and expression, which surely surpasses anything published up to that time (and probably surpasses much that has been published since then).

12. On the importance of Spinoza in the history of biblical interpretation, see Anchor Genesis, xx–xxii; Kugel 2007, ch. 1; and Curley 2014. Curley 1994 defends my (Spinozistic) view that biblical interpretation—and textual interpretation generally—can be a scientific discipline.

13. See the three massive volumes of Jonathan Israel's history of the Enlightenment (Israel 2001, 2006, and 2011), whose main conclusions are summarized in Israel 2010. No doubt Israel's grand narrative is open to just criticism. I've criticized some of his claims myself in Curley 2007. But to support the claim made in the text it is necessary only to cite Vernière 1954.

GENERAL PREFACE

In the last twenty years, I'm happy to say, anglophone scholars have begun to pay the TTP more attention. These years have seen several works which undertook to give it its due,¹⁴ and numerous others which, without being specifically about the TTP (or even specifically about Spinoza), provided important background to his religious and political thought.¹⁵ Perhaps we may hope that before too long the other major work in this volume, the *Political Treatise* (TP), will have its day.¹⁶ Though unfinished, it does a great deal to give concreteness to the programmatic position on politics sketched in the TTP.¹⁷

One fortunate, though hardly intended, consequence of the protracted period leading up to the production of this volume is that in the period between Volumes I and II we have seen the appearance of new critical editions of the TTP and TP, in the series published by Presses Universitaires de France (PUF), under the general editorship of Pierre-François Moreau, with highly qualified editors responsible for the individual volumes.¹⁸ In spite of the problems of the Gebhardt edition, which is gradually being superseded by the PUF edition, I still treat it as my default edition of the text, in the sense that, unless I see reason to think otherwise, I generally assume that Gebhardt's text is correct, and do not discuss earlier editions when I think he has clearly improved on them. His is still the most nearly complete edition of the texts. I also make my references to his volume and page numbers, to make it easier for students to navigate the secondary literature. As for

14. To mention only recent works in English which deal specifically with the TTP, and only the most notable of these: James 2012, Nadler 2011, Melamed and Rosenthal 2010, and Verbeek 2003. To these we might add two English translations of important French works on Spinoza's political thought generally: Balibar 1985a/1998 and Balibar 1985b/1989.

15. Any list will be incomplete, but even an incomplete list would have to include Haitsma Mulier 1980, Menasseh 1842/1972, 1652/1987, Ibn Ezra 1988, Van den Enden 1665/1992, Van Gelderen 1992, Van Bunge and Klever 1996, Bodian 1997, Smith 1997, Nadler 1999, 2001, Preus 2001, Grotius 1647/2001, Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, Meyer 2005, Kugel 2007, Koerbagh/Wielema 2011, Weststeijn 2012, Van Velthuysen 2013.

16. In some places this is already happening. Cf. the recent judgment of three French scholars: "Relégué pendant longtemps à l'arrière-plan, au profit de l'*Éthique* et du *Traité théologico-politique*, le *Traité politique* est aujourd'hui au coeur des études spinozistes" (Jaquet 2008, 11). Not many anglophone scholars would be apt to say this now, but we may hope that in a few years we will catch up with our European colleagues.

17. *Perhaps* it also signals a significant shift in Spinoza's position on central issues in political theory, such as the idea of a social contract. I am more skeptical about the latter point than are some other scholars, but the research I anticipate should shed light on these questions.

18. For details, see Works Cited, Editions of Spinoza's works, ALM and PR. To these editions we must add Pina Totaro's invaluable edition of the TTP, with the Latin text (generally, but not invariably, following Akkerman), an Italian translation on facing pages, and tremendously helpful annotation. (See "Totaro" in Works Cited.)

GENERAL PREFACE

the problems of his edition, I have tried to give a fair account of them in the notes and to discuss the more important textual issues raised by subsequent editors.

As for the other major component of this volume, we do not yet have a volume of the correspondence in the PUF series. But we do have the Akkerman, Hubbeling, and Westerbrink translation of that correspondence (AHW), which contains many valuable improvements on Gebhardt's text.

At the beginning of this preface I signaled my intention to set this project aside "at least for a while." Believing, for the reasons indicated, that Volume II improves on Volume I in a number of respects, I would like to come back to my earlier work in a few years, and make the kinds of improvement, in a revised edition of Volume I, that I believe I've made in Volume II. I cannot know whether I will be granted the continued longevity and good health necessary to achieve that goal. But if things go well, I would also hope to make this edition more complete by adding some portions of Spinoza's *Hebrew Grammar*. It's hard for me to believe that many people will want to read a complete translation of that work, much of which is devoted to laying out the conjugations of Hebrew verbs. But there are some passages in it which seem to me of genuine philosophical interest. I would have included them in this edition if I had believed that the benefits, in terms of understanding Spinoza's thoughts about language, outweighed the costs of delaying further the publication of works I think are vastly more important. I do not include the two short scientific treatises on the rainbow and the calculation of chances which Gebhardt ascribed to Spinoza. I believe there is now a consensus that they are not by Spinoza.

In addition to the people thanked above for their assistance on this volume, there are many others whose help I am grateful for. First, of course, my editors at Princeton University Press: Rob Tempio, Debbie Tegarden, and Jenn Backer. It was Rob's patient prodding over the years, and Debbie's gentle nudging, which finally persuaded me to turn loose of this manuscript. And Jenn's insightful questions about what I had written saved me from many failures of clarity and downright mistakes. Among the many others to whom I am grateful are: Jacob Adler, Fokke Akkerman, James Amelang, Wiep van Bunge, Herman de Dijn, Scott Dennis, Alan Donagan, Dan Garber, Don Garrett, Xavier Gil, Liz Goodnick, Ian Hacking, John Huddlestun, Jonathan Israel, Susan James, Gary Knoppers, James Kugel, Mogens Laerke, Jacqueline Lagrée, Michael LeBuffe, Maurie Mandelbaum, Jon Miller, Pierre-François Moreau, Steve Nadler, Debra Nails, Geoffrey Parker, David Potter, Charles Ramond, Michael Rosenthal, Don Rutherford,

GENERAL PREFACE

E. P. Sanders, Tad Schmaltz, Rebecca Scott, Piet Steenbakkers, Pina Totaro, Jeroen van de Ven, Theo Verbeek, and Manfred Walther. Finally, I owe an immense debt to my wife, Ruth, who has made a wonderful home for me for over fifty-five years now, traveled cheerfully with me to the many places where my work or curiosity took me, and given me her sustaining love, through good times and bad. She has also helped greatly by reading the page proofs of the entire volume.

When I began this project in 1969, I was fortunate enough to have a research position at the Australian National University—ultimately a tenured research position. It was with some trepidation that I returned to a teaching job in the United States in 1977, with the project not quite half completed. But on the whole things have worked out well for me. I have been fortunate again to have the support of numerous universities and granting agencies: the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Michigan, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Humanities Center, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. I am very grateful for the support of these institutions. Without it the completion of this project would still be years away.

I dedicated the first volume to my mentor in Australia, John Passmore. I dedicate this volume to Bernard Peach, who gave me my first introduction to Spinoza, in a characteristically wonderful seminar at Duke many years ago, and who was a model of what a thesis supervisor should be.

Short Titles and Abbreviations

IN VOLUME I, I undertook to make reference to the pagination of the Gebhardt edition¹ standard for discussions of Spinoza's works, as reference to certain older editions of Plato and Aristotle has long been standard for those ancient philosophers. Though Gebhardt's edition is in the process of being superseded by the edition published by Presses Universitaires de France (PUF),² the idea of using the Gebhardt pagination as a standard form of reference remains valid and seems to be gaining some acceptance. Gebhardt's edition is available online in the IntelLex database, which is a great convenience for those who have access to it (as students and teachers often will through a university or college library), and many secondary works use it in their references.

I give the Gebhardt pagination and line numbers in the margins. In footnotes and prefaces "Gebhardt III/5" (or sometimes simply "III/5") refers to Volume III, page 5 of the Gebhardt edition. "Gebhardt III/273/10–22" refers to Volume III, page 273, lines 10–22 of that edition.

For the *Political Treatise* (*Tractatus politicus*, or TP) Spinoza's *Opera posthuma* numbered the paragraphs in each chapter, and those paragraph numbers often provide the most convenient way to refer to a passage. So "TP iii, 1" refers to the first paragraph in Chapter 3 of the *Political Treatise*.

The paragraphs in the *Theological-Political Treatise* (*Tractatus theologico-politicus*, or TTP) were not numbered and are often rather long. In company with some other writers on Spinoza, I like to use the paragraph numbering system introduced by a nineteenth-century German editor, C. H. Bruder, who generally breaks the text up into fairly short and coherent units. I give the Bruder paragraphing of the TTP in brackets in the text of that work and use chapter and Bruder paragraph numbers within the TTP to refer to other sections of that work. So within the TTP a footnote reference to "vii, 23" refers to Bruder paragraph 23 in chapter 7 of the TTP. More recently ALM have introduced their own system of paragraph numbers for the TTP, which I don't find so convenient, since it tends to take as its paragraphs longer portions of the text, which don't permit as precise a reference as the Bruder paragraphs. But to accommodate readers who wish to follow references to the text

1. For details of the Gebhardt edition, see Works Cited, pp. 725–26.

2. At this stage the PUF edition is incomplete. For details of its state as we go to press, see Works Cited, Editions of Spinoza's Works, ALM, MBG, and PR.

SHORT TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

which use that system, I have added on pp. 767–69 a table correlating the ALM paragraph numbers with the Bruder paragraph numbers.

References to other works of Spinoza use the following abbreviations:

- KV* = *Korte Verhandeling van God, de Mensch, en des Zelfs Welstand* (*Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being* = *Short Treatise*)
- TdIE* = *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (*Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* = *Treatise on the Intellect*)
- Ep.* = *Epistolae* (*Letters*)
- PP* = *Renati Des Cartes Principiorum philosophiae, Pars I & II, More geometrico demonstrata* (*Parts I and II of Descartes' "Principles of Philosophy"* = *Descartes' Principles*), published in Latin in 1663, and in a Dutch translation in 1664
- CM* = *Cogitata metaphysica* (*Metaphysical Thoughts*)
- E* = *Ethica* (*Ethics*)
- OP* = *Opera posthuma* (*Posthumous Works*), published in 1677, containing the first printed editions of the *TdIE*, *Ep.*, *E*, *TP*, and a(n incomplete) grammar of the Hebrew language
- NS* = *De nagelate schriften*, a Dutch version of the *OP*, published in the same year but without a translation of the *Hebrew Grammar*

In addition, for works written in the geometric style, it is often most convenient to use the following abbreviations:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| A = | axiom |
| D (following a roman numeral) = | definition |
| D (following an arabic numeral) = | demonstration |
| P = | proposition |
| L = | lemma |
| C = | corollary |
| S = | scholium (i.e., a note, often containing an important digression from the main line of argument in the text) |

SHORT TITLES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Exp. = explanation

App. = appendix

Def. Aff. = definition of the affects

So “PP I D5” refers to Definition 5 of Part I of *Descartes’ Principles*.
“E I P8S2” refers to the Scholium 2 to Proposition 8 of Part I of the *Ethics*.

For more abbreviations and short titles, used in referring to works by other authors, see Works Cited, pp. 724–64.

Letters, 29–41

SEPTEMBER 1665–SEPTEMBER 1669



EDITORIAL PREFACE

PEOPLE AND THEMES

Spinoza's principal correspondents in this period are Henry Oldenburg, Johannes Hudde, and Jarig Jelles. He exchanged five letters with Oldenburg (Letters 29–33) and sent three letters each to Hudde (Letters 34–36) and Jelles (Letters 39–41). There are also single letters to Johannes Bouwmeester (Letter 37) and Johannes van der Meer (Letter 38).

Oldenburg

Oldenburg (1619–1677) we know well from Volume I. The letters he and Spinoza exchanged in this period tell us a good deal about Spinoza's interaction with contemporary scientists. Particularly important is Christiaan Huygens, whom he seems to have known well in these years, and whose research he was happy to report on.¹

We learn also that by the fall of 1665 Spinoza had begun work on the *Theological-Political Treatise* (TTP). It's clear from what he tells Oldenburg that one reason for writing this work was that he did not find the Dutch Republic to be as free as he would claim it was in his Preface.² An illustration of this is that while he was working on the TTP, the arrest, trial, imprisonment, and death in prison of his good friend Adriaan Koerbagh vividly demonstrated the limits of the Dutch Republic's willingness to allow freedom of thought and expression.³

Koerbagh's crime was to have published one work (*Een Bloembhof van allerley lieflijkheid* [*A Flower Garden of all kinds of loveliness*]) and to have attempted to publish another (*Een Ligt schijnende in duistere plaatsen* [*A Light shining in dark places*]) which criticized organized religion from a point of view closely resembling the one Spinoza was to articulate in the TTP. He represented the Hebrew Bible as a work of human authorship, compiled by Ezra from other Jewish writings which had been handed down to him, and which included many stories no more credible than the legends surrounding Till Eulenspiegel. What is important in the Bible is just its core moral teaching: we must know and obey God, and love our neighbors.

1. On Spinoza's relations with Huygens, see Nadler 1999, 203–4, 221–22.

2. Cf. TTP Pref., §12, with Letter 30, fragment 2.

3. For information on Koerbagh, see Nadler 1999, 170–71, 264–69, and Israel 2001, ch. 10. It's now possible to read an English translation of *Een Ligt* in Koerbagh/Wielema 2011, with a very informative introduction by Wiep van Bunge discussing Adriaan Koerbagh, his brother, Johannes, and the circle of radical religious thinkers they belonged to. At this point *Een Bloembhof* seems to be available only in the Dutch original. See Koerbagh 1668.

When we first encounter talk of the TTP, in Letters 29–30, it appears that Spinoza may have conceived it more as a theological work than as a political one. “I am now composing,” he writes, “a treatise on my opinion regarding scripture.” This would be an inadequate description of the work eventually published in 1670, which supplemented the theological argument for freedom of thought and expression with an argument drawn from political theory. It seems possible that Spinoza may have broadened the scope of his argument because he was distressed that the civil authorities had bowed to ecclesiastical pressure in the persecution of Koerbagh, and wanted to defend their right to allow greater freedom than the clergy would be inclined to permit.

Perhaps Spinoza was also influenced by his reading of Hobbes’ *Leviathan*, whose text became available to him, during this period, in languages he could read, first in a Dutch translation by his friend Abraham van Berckel (1667), and then in Hobbes’ own Latin translation (1668).⁴ Hobbes may have helped him to see how a secular approach to political theory could provide a useful way of defending religious liberty.⁵ Unfortunately the surviving correspondence from this period provides little information about the work which was probably occupying most of Spinoza’s attention. From this correspondence you would think that he was concentrating mainly on the *Ethics* and on his scientific work.

In their correspondence from this period Oldenburg is still in his encouraging mode. See particularly Letter 31, whose message is: “Get your philosophy out; everything will be all right; you live in a free country; and anyway, you wouldn’t really say anything to harm religion, would you?” His attitude will change once he has read the TTP.

The letter which has attracted the most philosophical discussion is Letter 32, where Spinoza responds to Oldenburg’s question concerning our knowledge of how the parts of Nature agree with the whole and with each other. Spinoza does not claim to know how these things agree, which he says would require knowing the whole of Nature and all of its parts. But he thinks it clear that there is such an agreement, and what this seems to mean for him is that the human body and the human mind

4. However, Secretan 1987, following Schoneveld 1983, suggests that some parts of Hobbes’ *Leviathan* may have been available to Spinoza as early as 1655.

5. The idea that *Leviathan* might have suggested a secular way of defending religious liberty may seem strange to those who identify religious liberty with the separation of church and state, and see Hobbes’ subordination of church to state as antithetical to religious liberty. In Curley 2007 I’ve argued for a reading of Hobbes which makes him more friendly to that value. For a more extended discussion of these issues, see Nelson 2010. If Hobbes did influence Spinoza’s thought in this area, his influence may not have been direct. His work was quite popular in the Dutch Republic and Spinoza would have encountered Hobbesian ideas in Van Hove 1661.

are parts of nature (IV/173a).⁶ What that in turn seems to mean is that the body is part of a law-governed causal network, and that the mind is part of an infinite intellect which reflects everything that happens in nature. Our impression that we and the things around us are independent of one another is an illusion born of our finitude and ignorance.

Oldenburg's final letter to Spinoza in this period, Letter 33, is the last we have between them for ten years. In 1667 Oldenburg was imprisoned in the Tower of London for two months, on suspicions aroused by his extensive foreign correspondence. The time he spent in the Tower may have contributed to the greater caution he showed when their correspondence resumed in 1675. See, for example, Letters 61 and 62.

Hudde

Johannes Hudde (1628–1704) was a student at the University of Leiden in the 1650s. There he became interested in mathematics, and joined a research group led by Frans van Schooten, which translated Descartes' *Geometry* into Latin, publishing it in an edition which also contained appendices by Van Schooten, Jan de Witt, and Hudde. Though he published relatively little in mathematics, he is said to have been recognized in his own time as "one of the greatest living mathematicians."⁷ Leibniz studied his unpublished mathematical manuscripts, reported finding many excellent results in them, and may have been influenced by them in developing the calculus.

Hudde also worked in optics, producing microscopes and grinding lenses for telescopes, and corresponded with Huygens concerning problems of probability, life expectancy, and canal maintenance, a subject in which he took a strong interest after he became burgomaster of Amsterdam in 1672. He held that post for thirty years. In 1657 he directed the flooding of parts of Holland to block the advance of the French army.

The three letters to Hudde are mainly concerned with problems about the nature of God and the consequences of his necessary existence. To some extent this material duplicates arguments we are familiar with from the *Ethics*, but there are some interesting variations on the presentations there. The final letter in this series discusses a problem in optics and asks Hudde's advice about it.

6. For an explanation of this reference, see "Provenance of the Letters," p. 7.

7. See Vermij and Atzema 1995. The work Vermij and Atzema publish in that article is evidently the work in dioptrics Spinoza refers to in Letter 36. For a discussion of Spinoza's place in the history of optics, see Klever and Van Zuylen 1990.

Jelles

We did not encounter Jarig Jelles (1619/20?–1683) in Volume I. He was a Mennonite, associated with the Collegiant movement,⁸ and one of Spinoza's closest friends. As a young man he was a grocery merchant, but by 1653 he had accumulated enough wealth to entrust his business to a manager, and dedicate himself to the pursuit of knowledge. He was one of those who persuaded Spinoza to publish his geometric exposition of Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*, whose publication he subsidized. The letters to Jelles in this period mainly concern scientific (or pseudoscientific) matters, in optics, hydrodynamics, and alchemy.

Bouwmeester

We met Johannes Bouwmeester, a close friend of Spinoza's, in Volume I. I have nothing to add to the biographical information given there. The letter addressed to him in this section of the correspondence, Letter 37, is particularly interesting for its discussion of method, in a manner reminiscent of the TdIE, and for its claim that the intellect is not liable, as the body is, to the accidents of fortune.

Van der Meer

Not much is known about Johannes van der Meer, the addressee of Letter 38, except that he was a merchant in Leiden.⁹

PROVENANCE OF THE LETTERS

For most letters I give the source in parentheses after its number in this edition.

"OP" indicates that the default text for translation is the Latin version in the *Opera posthuma*; "NS," that the default text is the Dutch of the *Nagelate schriften*; "A" means that it is an autograph copy; "C," a copy, but not an autograph. In cases too complicated to indicate in this simple fashion, a footnote indicates the source. I do not claim to have noted all differences between different versions of the letters, but hope to have noted the most important of them.

In the OP the letters are organized first by correspondent, according to the frequency of correspondence—so Oldenburg, for whom the editors had twenty-five letters to and from Spinoza, comes first, whereas

8. For further details on Jelles and the Collegiant movement, see Nadler 1999, 140–41, 168–69; Steenbakkers 1994, *passim*; and Fix 1991.

9. See AHW, 46.

Burgh, for whom they had only two letters, comes last. The arrangement and numbering in the NS are the same as that in the OP. The Hackett editors are prone to say of certain letters (e.g., 31, 33, 42, 47, etc.) that they are known only from the OP. But any letter included in the OP appears also in Dutch in the NS. Since the NS translations were not done from the OP, this sometimes provides a useful check on the typesetting of the OP.

In general I follow the Gebhardt text, except where emended in AHW, giving preference to the OP unless the original was written in Dutch, or there is a copy of the original which has a claim to precedence. Where the bracketed page numbers are followed by an “a”—as in Letter 37, for example—that indicates that the text I am translating appears in the upper half of the Gebhardt page. A “b” in the bracketed page numbers—as in Letter 39—indicates that the text translated appears on the lower half of the Gebhardt page.

Spinoza and Oldenburg

Of Letters 29–33 (to and from Oldenburg), Letter 29 was not in the OP; Gebhardt’s text comes from the original preserved in the Orphanage of the Mennonite Collegiants in Amsterdam. Letter 30 also was not in the OP. It consists of two fragments discovered at different times in Oldenburg’s correspondence. Wolf discovered the first and published it in *Philosophy* 10 (1935): 200–204. He had found it quoted—as news from “an odd philosopher, that lives in Holland, but no Hollander”—in a letter from Oldenburg to Sir Robert Moray, 7 October 1665. The second was first published in an edition of Boyle’s works (*The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle* [London, 1744]). Oldenburg quoted it in a letter to Boyle of 10 October 1665, in which Oldenburg again described Spinoza as “a certain odd philosopher,” but this time added “whom you know better than he [Sir Robert Moray], it being Signior Spinoza.” Gebhardt has only the second fragment.

Letter 31 is mainly from the OP, where it is Letter 14. A few words have been added from the NS version. Letter 32 was Letter 15 in the OP, whose text is the primary basis for the translation. But some text (marked “A” for autograph) has been added from the original, which is in the possession of the Royal Society in London. Letter 33 is Letter 16 in the OP (with a brief addition from the NS version).

Spinoza and Hudde

Letters 34–36 (to Hudde) were all written originally in Dutch and appeared in both the OP and the NS, where they are Letters 39–41. Neither the OP nor the NS indicates the addressee of these letters. Van Vloten and Land thought they were written to Huygens. More recent editors have concluded that Hudde was the addressee. There is a note by Leibniz to this effect (AHW), and the recent discovery of Hudde's *Specilla circularia*, to which Spinoza refers in Letter 36, confirms it.

Van Vloten and Land and Gebhardt assumed that Spinoza had translated the Dutch originals into Latin for the OP, and that the NS translator retranslated the Latin versions back into Dutch, which would make the NS versions further removed from the original than the OP versions. I believe Akkerman has shown that this is extremely unlikely.¹⁰ But I believe Akkerman has also shown it to be unlikely that the NS versions simply reproduce the originals, that the Dutch of the NS had probably received some editorial revisions, and that the Latin translations of the OP were probably done from the original. Following the lead of AHW, I translate the OP version, noting potentially significant NS variations in the notes.

Spinoza and Bouwmeester

Letter 37 (to Bouwmeester) was written originally in Latin and is Letter 42 in the OP and NS. A copy, not in Spinoza's hand, was preserved in the Orphanage of the Mennonite Collegiants and printed by Gebhardt at the bottom of the page. I translate the OP version, noting variations in the copy where I think they might be interesting.

Spinoza and Van der Meer

Letter 38 (to Van der Meer), originally written in Dutch, is known only from the NS and the OP translation. Gebhardt prints the NS version in the upper half of the page, because he doesn't think Spinoza himself was responsible for the OP version. His reasons for thinking this may be dubious, but his conclusion is probably right. I translate the NS version, noting potentially significant variations in the OP.

10. See Akkerman 1980, 47–57.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

Spinoza and Jelles

Letters 39–41 (to Jelles) were originally written in Dutch. Gebhardt gives priority to the Latin versions of the OP, on the theory (rejected above) that Spinoza himself was responsible for that translation. The situation is similar to that in the letters to Hudde. But in this case I give priority to the Dutch versions, relegating the variations in the Latin to the footnotes. They are letters 44–46 in the NS.

[IV/164]

LETTER 29 (A)

HENRY OLDENBURG TO THE VERY
ILLUSTRIOUS GENTLEMAN B. D. S.

5 Most Excellent Sir, and dearest Friend,

From your last letter to me, written on 4 September,¹ it is clear that You take our affairs to heart, not casually. You have obliged not only me, but also our most noble Mr. Boyle, who joins me in sending you the greatest thanks, and who will, at the earliest opportunity, repay
10 your kindness and affection with every kind of service he can render. You can be sure that the same is true of me.

As for that overzealous man who, in spite of the translation of the *Treatise on Colors*² now ready here, nevertheless wanted to prepare another one, perhaps he will think he has acted against his
15 own interest in his ill-timed eagerness. For what will become of his Translation if the Author should enlarge the Latin version available here in England with a great many Experiments not found in the English edition? Necessarily ours, to be distributed shortly now, would then be completely preferred to his, and thought much more
20 valuable by all sensible men. But let him be pleased with himself, if he wishes. We shall look after our own business as seems most advisable to us.

Kircher's *Subterranean World*³ has not yet appeared in our English world, because of the plague,⁴ which prohibits almost all commerce. In addition we have this dreadful War,⁵ which brings with it nothing
25 but an Iliad of evils, and almost banishes all civilized behavior from the world.

1. This letter is not known except for this reference, but evidently it gave Oldenburg some information about the projected *Theological-Political Treatise*.

2. I.e., Boyle 1664.

3. Athanasius Kircher's *Mundus subterraneus* (1665) was a treatise on forces and processes within the earth. A German Jesuit, Kircher fled Germany in 1631 to escape the Thirty Years War, and eventually settled in Rome, where he conducted an extensive correspondence about scientific and cultural matters, both within Europe and with Jesuit missionaries around the world. His scientific curiosity ranged over many disciplines, and he was boldly experimental in his methods. Once he had himself lowered into the crater of Vesuvius to observe its features after an eruption.

4. In the spring and summer of 1665 there was an outbreak of bubonic plague in London, which may have killed as many as one hundred thousand people, or about one-fifth of the population. Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year* is a vivid, if fictionalized, account.

5. The Second Anglo-Dutch War, which lasted from 1664 to 1667. As in the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652–1654), the main cause was rivalry over trade. For further details see Israel 1995, 766–76.

In the meantime, however, although our Philosophic Society⁶ holds no public meetings at this dangerous time, nevertheless here and there its Fellows do not forget that they are such. So separately some devote themselves to Hydrostatic Experiments, some to Anatomical Experiments, others to Mechanical Experiments, and still others to other
 30 subjects. Mr. Boyle has examined the origin of Forms and Qualities as it has heretofore been treated in the Schools and by teachers and has
 [IV/165] composed a treatise on it—undoubtedly excellent—which will soon go to press.⁷

I see that You are not so much philosophizing as (if it is permissible to speak thus) Theologizing; for you are recording your thoughts about Angels,⁸ prophecy and miracles. But perhaps you are doing this Philosophically. However that may be, I am sure that the work will be
 5 worthy of you and something I shall want very much to see. Since these very difficult times stand in the way of freedom of communication, I ask you at least not to be reluctant to indicate to me in your next letter what your plan and aim are in this writing of yours.

Every day we expect news here of a second naval battle, unless perhaps
 10 your Fleet has returned again to port. The courage which you hint is debated among you is bestial, not human. For if men acted according to the guidance of reason, they would not tear one another to pieces in this way, as anyone can see. But why am I complaining? There will be vices as long as there are men. But they don't go on without interruption, and they are compensated for by the arrival of better times.⁹

15 While I was writing this, a letter was delivered to me from the distinguished Danzig Astronomer, Mr. Johannes Hevelius,¹⁰ who tells me,

6. The Royal Society, whose origins Oldenburg had described to Spinoza in Letter 7, Volume I, p. 189.

7. See Boyle 1666. Available in Early English Books Online. For a good modern edition, with a helpful introduction, see Stewart 1991.

8. In the TTP as it has come down to us, there are a few scattered comments on angels (most significantly in i, 19–20; ii, 44; and iv, 31), but no extended discussion comparable to the chapters on prophecy and miracles. It appears from Lucas's biography that this was a topic the young men from the synagogue wanted to question Spinoza about, when they visited him shortly before the excommunication. See Lucas 1927, 44ff. There may have been some discussion of angels in the lost defense Spinoza wrote after the excommunication, defending his departure from the synagogue. For speculations about the probable contents of that defense, see Curley 2015a. The early accounts claim that Spinoza included some parts of his defense in the TTP. Oldenburg's reference to angels may be an indication that at this stage Spinoza's draft of the TTP included material on angels which was omitted from the final version.

9. As Akkerman notes, these last two lines quote Tacitus almost exactly. Cf. his *Histories* IV, lxiv.

10. Johannes Hevelius (1611–1687) was a member of a noble family in Gdansk, who studied at the University of Leiden. When he returned home, he built an observatory on top of his house, and equipped it with instruments of his own making. He is best

among other things, that his *Cometography*, consisting of twelve books, has already been in press for a whole year now, and that 400 pages, or the first nine books, are finished. He indicates, furthermore, that he
 20 has sent me several Copies of his *Prodromus Cometicus*, in which he has described fully the first of the two recent Comets.¹¹ But these have not yet reached me. He has decided, in addition, to publish another book on the second Comet, and to submit it to the judgment of the learned.

You would oblige me if you would tell me what your people think of Huygens' Pendulums, especially those which are said to provide such
 25 an exact measure of time that they could serve to determine Longitudes at sea. Also, what is happening about his *Dioptrics*, and his Treatise *On Motion*, both of which we have long been waiting for now? I am certain that he is not idle. I would just like to know what progress he
 30 is making. May you fare well and continue to love

Your most devoted,
 Henry Oldenburg

To M. Benedictus Spinoza,
 In the Baggyne Street
 In the house of Mr. Daniel, the painter,
 35 At the sign of Adam and Eve, in The Hague¹²

[London, c. 20 September 1665]¹³

[IV/166]

LETTER 30 (C)

B. D. S. TO THE MOST NOBLE AND LEARNED
 GENTLEMAN HENRY OLDENBURG

[Fragment 1]¹⁴

I have seen Kircher's *Subterranean World* at Mr. Huygens'. He praises Kircher's piety, but not his ability. I don't know whether this is because

known now for his *Selenographia* (1647), an atlas of the moon, and for a catalog of the stars which was the most comprehensive of its time (published posthumously in 1690).

11. On these comets, see Boschiero 2008.

12. Apparently Oldenburg was misinformed about Spinoza's address. Van de Ven *Facts*, ch. 7, notes that Spinoza never rented rooms in the Bagijnestraat in The Hague. At this time he lodged in the house of the painter Daniel Tydeman, in the Kerklaan in Voorburg. But Tydeman may also have been the owner of the house "Adam and Eve" in The Hague.

13. This letter is not dated, but its approximate date can be inferred from the date of the lost letter to which it replies and from the known date of Letter 31.

14. The first fragment of this letter is not in Gebhardt's edition, but will be treated for indexing purposes as if it appeared on IV/166. It was first discovered and published by Wolf in 1935 (see Wolf 1935).

Kircher treats pendulums, and concludes that they will not help at all to discover longitudes (which is completely opposed to Huygens' opinion).

You want to know what Our People think of Huygens' new Pendulums. As yet I can't tell you anything definite about this. Still, I know this: the craftsman who has the exclusive right to make them is completely giving up the work, because he can't sell them. I don't know whether this is because commerce has been interrupted [by the war] or because he's trying to sell them at too high a price. He's asking 300 Caroline florins each.¹⁵

When I asked Huygens about his dioptrics, and about his other treatise on Parhelia, he replied that he is still investigating something in dioptrics, but that as soon as he has discovered it, he will send that book to the press, together with the treatise on Parhelia. But I believe that at present he is thinking more about his trip to France than about anything else (for he is preparing to go to France to live, as soon as his father has returned).¹⁶

What he says he is investigating in Dioptrics is "Whether the lenses in Telescopes can be so arranged that the defect of one corrects the defect of the other, so that all the parallel rays passing through the objective lens will arrive at the eye as if they came together in a mathematical point?" This still seems to me impossible.¹⁷ For the rest, in the whole of his dioptric—as I've partly seen, and partly, if I'm not mistaken, understood from him—he only discusses spherical figures.

But as for the treatise on motion about which you also ask, I think you are waiting for it in vain.¹⁸ It's too long now since he began to boast that by calculation he had discovered rules of motion and laws of nature far different from those Descartes gives, and that Descartes' rules and laws are almost all false. Still, so far he has not published any example of this. I know, of course, that about a year ago he told me that all the things he had previously discovered about motion by calculation he afterward found had been proven in England by

15. For a helpful account of Huygens' work on pendulums, see Mahoney 1980 or Bos's introduction to Blackwell 1986, an English translation of Huygens' *Horologium Oscillatorium* (*Pendulum Clock*).

16. During this period the French comptroller-general, Colbert, was attempting to attract eminent scholars and scientists to Paris. The French Academy of Sciences granted Huygens a large pension and an apartment in its building.

17. Spinoza's intuitions in this matter seem to have been vindicated by the fact that Huygens eventually gave up this project when he learned of Newton's discoveries concerning chromatic aberration. See Oldenburg 1665, II, 524, n. 4.

18. Indeed, Huygens never did publish his projected treatise on the laws of motion, although "all Huygens' theorems on impact were correct (for perfectly elastic bodies)" and only Descartes' first "law of motion" was correct. See Oldenburg 1665, II, 542, nn. 5, 6.

experiments. But I hardly believe this.¹⁹ Moreover, as regards Descartes' sixth rule of motion,²⁰ I judge that he and Descartes are both completely mistaken. . . .

[Fragment 2]

- [IV/166/5] . . . I rejoice that your philosophers are alive and mindful of themselves and their republic.²¹ I shall wait for news of what they have done lately, when the warriors are sated with blood, and rest, to restore their strength a bit. If that famous mocker²² were alive in this age, he would surely die of laughter. But these turmoils move me,
 10 neither to laughter nor even to tears, but to philosophizing and to observing human nature better. For I do not think it right for me to mock nature, much less to lament it, when I reflect that men, like all other things, are only a part of nature, and that I do not know how each part of nature agrees with the whole to which it belongs, and how it coheres with the other parts. And I find, simply from the lack
 15 of this knowledge, that certain things in nature, which I perceive in part and only in mutilated way, and which do not agree at all with our philosophic mind, previously seemed to me vain, disorderly and absurd, whereas now I permit each to live according to his own mentality. Surely those who wish to die for their good may do so, so long as I am allowed to live for the true good.
 20 I am now composing a treatise on my opinion about scripture.²³ The considerations which move me to do this are the following:

1) the prejudices of the theologians; for I know that they are the greatest obstacle to men's being able to apply their minds to philosophy; so I am busy exposing them and removing them from the minds of the more prudent;

19. In Letter 33 (IV/176/12–22) Oldenburg will return to the topic of Huygens' experiments, confirming that they went as Huygens had claimed.

20. Cf. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* II, 51. Cf. Boyle's comment on this sentence in his letter to Oldenburg of 14 October 1665 (Oldenburg 1665, II, 569).

21. I.e., the republic of philosophers. Cf. Letter 31, IV/167/24.

22. In antiquity Democritus acquired a reputation for laughing at the follies of mankind, as Heraclitus did of weeping over them. Cf. Horace, *Epistles* 2.1.194. Since little of his work has survived, it is difficult to judge the justice of this reputation.

23. Note that Spinoza characterizes the TTP as a work stating his "opinion about scripture." He does not say explicitly that the work will also contain a political theory. The first two aims of the work are purely theological (in a broad sense of that term). In its final form the work does advance a political theory which supports the third goal, to defend freedom of philosophizing. But it also defends that freedom by the separation it proposes between philosophy and theology in Chs. xiv–xv. So it seems possible that at this point Spinoza did not contemplate developing the political theory we find in the last five chapters of the TTP which has come down to us.

LETTER 31, FROM OLDENBURG

- 25 2) the opinion the common people have of me; they never stop accusing me of atheism,²⁴ and I am forced to rebut this accusation as well as I can; and
- 3) the freedom of philosophizing and saying what we think, which I want to defend in every way; here the preachers suppress it as much as they can with their excessive authority and aggressiveness.²⁵
- 30 I do not yet hear that any Cartesian explains the phenomena of the recent comets on the Cartesian hypothesis, and I doubt that they can be rightly explained on that hypothesis. . . .²⁶
- [Voorburg, c. 1 October 1665]²⁷

[IV/167]

LETTER 31 (OP)

HENRY OLDENBURG TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED
GENTLEMAN B. D. S.

5 Most excellent sir, dear friend,

You act as becomes a judicious Man and a Philosopher: you love good Men. Nor should you doubt that they love you in return and judge your merits as they should. Mr. Boyle joins me in sending you warm greetings, and exhorts you to proceed with your Philosophizing
10 vigorously and precisely. Above all, if your investigation has shed any light on that difficult question concerning our knowledge of how each part of Nature agrees with its whole and in what way it agrees with other things, we ask you, most affectionately, to communicate it to us.

I entirely approve the reasons you mention as inducing you to com-
15 pose a Treatise on Scripture, and I passionately want to be able to see for myself what you have written on that subject. Mr. Serrarius may

24. On Spinoza's reputation for atheism at this time, see Nadler 1999, 203 (and the Editorial Preface to the *TTP*, pp. 47–49, and the Glossary-Index entry ATHEISM, pp. 615–17).

25. Contrast this with Spinoza's praise of Dutch liberty in *TTP* Pref., 12.

26. Descartes attempts to explain the origin and motions of comets in his *Principles of Philosophy* III, 118–39. He believed that the universe was a plenum, with the matter distributed in vortices, made up initially of particles of varying sizes and shapes. Over time he thought the particles would tend to become spherical. The finest particles would tend to settle at the centers of their vortices and form stars; the others would tend to recede from the centers and to revolve around them. Eventually the matter revolving around a star might be taken into other vortices, leaving nothing but the star, which might then begin to pass from one vortex to another. Hevelius's letter to Oldenburg, dated 22 May (1 June N.S.) 1665, but apparently not received until August of that year, may be found in Oldenburg 1965, II, 392–99.

27. This letter is undated, but as with Letter 29, its approximate date can be inferred from Letter 29 (written as a response to a letter dated 4 September) and from Letter 31 (dated 12 October and written as a response to this letter).

soon be sending me a small parcel.²⁸ If it seems appropriate to you, you can safely commit to him what you have already written, and be
 20 assured that we shall be prompt in returning the favor.

I have glanced, to some extent, at Kircher's *Subterranean World*. Though his reasonings and theories do not speak well for his ability, still, his Observations and Experiments, as he reports them to us there, testify to the Author's diligence and his desire to deserve well from the
 25 Republic of Philosophers. So you see, I ascribe a bit more to him than piety, and you will easily recognize the intent of those who sprinkle him with this Holy water.

When you speak about Huygens' *Treatise on Motion*, you hint that Descartes' Rules of motion are almost all false. I do not now have at hand the little book you previously published, concerning *Descartes'*
 30 *principles, Demonstrated Geometrically*. And I do not recall whether you showed that falsity there, or whether, to oblige others, you simply followed Descartes' tracks.

[IV/168] I wish you would finally reveal the fruit of your own talent, and entrust it to the Philosophical world, to cherish and nourish. I remember that somewhere²⁹ you claimed that we can understand and explain very clearly many of the things Descartes said surpass human understanding,
 5 indeed, that we can grasp things which are much more sublime and subtle. What's stopping you, my Friend? What are you afraid of? Try it. Get on with it. Finish it. It's a task of such importance! You will see that the whole Chorus of real Philosophers will be your advocate. I am bold
 10 enough to pledge my loyalty, which I would not do if I doubted whether I would be able to honor my pledge. I cannot in any way believe that you intend to undertake anything against the Existence and Providence of God.³⁰ As long as these supports are intact, Religion stands firm, and any Philosophic Contemplations are easily either defended or excused. Don't delay any longer, then, and don't let the critics hold you back.

15 I should think you will soon learn what is to be said about the recent Comets. The Dantziger, Hevelius, and the Frenchman, Auzout³¹—both

28. This seems likely to have been the copy of Adam Boreel's *Jesus Nazarenus Legislator*, a defense of Christianity, which Oldenburg had arranged for Peter Serrarius to make for him and Boyle when he learned that Boreel was near death. See Van de Ven *Facts*, ch. 7, and Oldenburg 1965, II, 404–5, 408, 534. On Boreel, see Iliffe 1996.

29. Cf. Meyer's preface to *Descartes' "Principles of Philosophy,"* I/132, Vol. I, p. 230.

30. Spinoza will not, of course, deny either God's existence or his providence. But it's doubtful that Oldenburg would have been satisfied by the account of divine providence he develops in the TTP. See particularly TTP vi, 39–51 (III/88–91). Spinoza's God is not providential in the sense of being a personal agent, who exercises a prudent concern for his creatures (cf. KV I, v, I/40).

31. On Hevelius, see the notes to Letter 29. Adrien Auzout was a member of the Paris Academy. They had disagreed about the location of the comet in the constellation Aries.

learned Men and Mathematicians—are debating about the Observations they have made. At the moment the controversy is being investigated; when the dispute has been adjudicated, I believe someone will communicate the whole matter to me, and I to you. This I can say now:
 20 all the Astronomers I know, at least, judge that there were not one, but two, Comets, and I have not met anyone yet who has tried to explain their Phenomena according to the Cartesian Hypothesis.

If you learn anything further about the studies and works of Mr.
 25 Huygens, about the success of his pendulums [NS: in the matter of determining Longitudes], or about his move to France, I beg you not to hesitate to let me know about it as soon as possible. And please add whatever may be said among You about a peace Treaty, about the plans of the Swedish army which has been sent to Germany, and about
 30 the progress of the Bishop of Munster.³² I believe that next summer the whole of Europe will be involved in wars, and everything seems to be tending toward a strange change.³³ Let us serve the supreme Deity with a pure mind, and cultivate a Philosophy which is true, solid and useful.

Some of our Philosophers, having followed the King to Oxford,³⁴
 35 have fairly frequent meetings there, and discuss the advancement of
 [IV/169] Physical studies. Among other things they have recently begun to inquire into the nature of Sounds. I believe they will conduct Experiments to determine by what proportion you must increase weights to stretch a string, without any other force, so that it will produce a higher Note which makes an assigned consonance with the first sound. More about
 5 these matters at another time. Farewell, and remember,

Your most devoted,
 Henry Oldenburg
 London, 12 October 1665

The Royal Society considered the matter and in 1666 decided in favor of Auzout. “Of the Judgment of Some of the English Astronomers, Touching the Differences between Two Learned Men, about an Observation Made of the First of the Two Late Comets” (*Philosophical Transactions*, 1665, pp. 150–51).

32. The English had sought to persuade Sweden to send an army to aid them in their war against the Dutch, and the Swedish army did indeed take “a considerable town from the Dutch” (10 November 1665, *Calendar of State Papers*, as cited in Van de Ven *Facts*, ch. 7). The Bishop of Munster did invade Holland in 1665.

33. It appears from this that Oldenburg had millenarian inclinations, which led him to think that the end of the world might be near. Cf. Letter 33, IV/178/24ff.

34. Charles II had left London to escape the plague.

LETTER 32 (OP)

B. D. S. TO THE MOST NOBLE AND LEARNED GENTLEMAN,
HENRY OLDENBURG

Reply to the Preceding

15 Most Noble Sir,

I am most grateful both to you and to the very Noble Mr. Boyle for your kind encouragement of my philosophizing. Indeed, I proceed as well as I can, considering the slenderness of my ability, never doubting, in the meantime, your assistance and good will.

20 When you ask me what I think about the question concerning
[IV/170a] *our knowledge of how each part of Nature agrees with its whole and how
it coheres with the others*, I think you are asking for the reasons by
which we are persuaded that each part of Nature agrees with its
whole and coheres with the others. For I already said in my preceding
5 Letter that I don't know [A: absolutely] how they really cohere and
how each part agrees with its whole. To know that would require
knowing the whole of Nature and all of its parts. So I shall try to
show [A: as briefly as I can] the reason which compels me to affirm
this. But first I should like to warn that I attribute to Nature nei-
10 ther beauty, nor ugliness, neither order nor confusion. For only in
relation to our imagination can things be called beautiful or ugly,
orderly or confused.

By the coherence of parts, then, I understand nothing but that the
laws *or* the nature of the one part adapts itself to the laws *or* the nature
of the other part so that they are opposed to each other as little as
15 possible. Concerning whole and parts, I consider things as parts of
some whole to the extent that the nature of the one adapts itself to
that of the other so that they [A: all] agree with one another as far as
possible. But insofar as they disagree with one another, to that extent
[IV/171a] each forms in our Mind an idea distinct from the others, and therefore
it is considered as a whole and not as a part.

For example, when the motions of the particles of lymph, chyle, etc.,
so adapt themselves to one another, in relation to their size and shape,
5 that they completely agree with one another, and they all constitute one
fluid together, to that extent only the chyle, lymph, etc., are considered
as parts of the blood. But insofar as we conceive the particles of lymph,
by reason of their shape and motion, to differ from the particles of
chyle, to that extent we consider them as a whole and not as a part.

Let us feign³⁵ now, if you please, that there is a little worm living
 10 in the blood which is capable of distinguishing by sight the particles
 of the blood, of lymph, [A: of chyle], etc., and capable of observing by
 reason how each particle, when it encounters another, either bounces
 back, or communicates a part of its motion, etc. Indeed, it would live
 in this blood as we do in this part of the universe, and would consider
 15 each particle of the blood as a whole, not as a part. It could not know
 how all the parts of the blood are regulated by the universal nature
 of the blood, and compelled to adapt themselves to one another, as
 the universal nature of the blood requires, so that they agree with one
 another in a definite way.

[IV/172a] For if we should feign that there are no causes outside the blood
 which would communicate new motions to the blood, and no space
 outside the blood, nor any other bodies to which the particles of blood
 could transfer their motion, it is certain that the blood would always
 5 remain in the same state, and its particles would undergo no variations
 other than those which can be conceived from the given relation of the
 motion of the blood to the lymph, chyle, etc.³⁶ Thus the blood would
 always have to be considered as a whole and not as a part. But because
 there are a great many other causes which regulate the laws of the nature
 of the blood in a definite way,³⁷ and which in turn are regulated by the
 10 blood, the result is that other motions and other variations arise in [A:
 the particles of] the blood which follow not simply from the relation
 of the motion of its parts to one another, but from the relation of the
 motion of the blood [A: as a whole] and of its external causes to one
 another. In this way the blood has the nature of a part and not of a
 whole. This is what I say concerning whole and part.

15 Now all bodies in nature can and must be conceived as we have
 here conceived the blood, for all bodies are surrounded by others, and
 are determined by one another to existing and producing an effect in
 [IV/173a] a fixed and determinate way, the same ratio of motion to rest always
 being preserved in all of them at once, [that is, in the whole universe].³⁸
 From this it follows that every body, insofar as it exists modified in a
 definite way, must be considered as a part of the whole universe, must
 agree with its whole and must cohere with the remaining bodies. And
 5 since the nature of the universe is not limited, as the nature of the

35. OP: *fingamus*. A: *concipiamus*, let us conceive. But when *fingamus* occurs below in the OP (at l.18), A also reads: *fingamus*.

36. A: than those which can follow from the nature of the blood alone, i.e., from the relation of the motion of the lymph, chyle, etc., to one another.

37. A: by which the whole nature of the blood is regulated in a definite way.

38. The bracketed phrase, not present in A, is added in the OP.

blood is, but is absolutely infinite, [its parts are regulated in infinite ways by this nature of the infinite power, and compelled to undergo infinitely many variations].³⁹

But in relation to substance I conceive each part to have a closer union with its whole. For as I tried to demonstrate previously in my
 10 first Letter (which I wrote to you while I was still living in Rijnsburg), since it is of the nature of substance to be infinite, it follows that each part pertains to the nature of corporeal substance, and can neither be nor be conceived without it.⁴⁰

15 You see, therefore, how and why I think that the human Body is a part of Nature.⁴¹ But as far as the human Mind is concerned, I think it is a part of Nature⁴² too. For I maintain that there is also in nature an infinite power of thinking, which, insofar as it is infinite, contains
 [IV/174a] in itself objectively the whole of Nature, and whose thoughts proceed in the same way as Nature, its object, does. Next, I maintain that the human Mind is this same power, not insofar as it is infinite and perceives
 5 the whole of Nature, but insofar as it is finite and perceives only the human body. For this reason I maintain that the human Mind is a part of a certain infinite intellect.

But it would take too long to explain accurately and demonstrate here all these things, along with those connected with them. And I do not think you expect this of me at present. Indeed, I wonder whether
 10 I have sufficiently grasped your intention, and have not answered a different question than the one you were asking. Please let me know.

As for what you write next—that I hinted that Descartes' Rules of motion are almost all false—if I remember rightly, I said that Mr. Huygens thinks this. I did not affirm that any of the Rules was false except
 15 the sixth.⁴³ And about that, I said I think Mr. Huygens is also wrong. On that occasion I asked you to communicate to me the experiment you have tried according to this hypothesis in your Royal Society. But since you say nothing about this, I infer that you are not permitted to reply.

Huygens has been, and still is, completely occupied with polishing
 [IV/175a] lenses. To this end he has constructed a rather elegant instrument on which he can also turn the lenses. But what progress he has made with

39. For the bracketed phrase A has: the variations of its parts which can follow from this infinite power must be infinite.

40. A: For since it is of the nature of substance to be infinite (as I tried to demonstrate previously, when I was still living in Rijnsburg), it follows from this that each part of the whole corporeal substance pertains to the whole substance, and can neither be nor be conceived without the rest of the substance.

41. A: a part of the universe.

42. A: a part of the universe.

43. Cf. Letter 30, fragment 1.

this I still do not know. Nor, to confess the truth, do I greatly desire to know.⁴⁴ For experience has taught me sufficiently that spherical lenses are more safely and better polished with a free hand than with any sort of instrument. Concerning the success of his pendulums and the timing of his move to France, I cannot yet write anything certain.

[IV/175b] [A: The Bishop of Munster, having foolishly gone into Frisia, as Aesop's goat went into the well,⁴⁵ has not been able to accomplish anything. Indeed, unless the winter begins very early, he will not be able to leave Frisia without great losses. There is no doubt that it was only because of the urging of some traitor that he dared to undertake this action. But all these things are too old to be written as news. And in the last week or two, nothing new has happened which is worth writing about.

20 There appears to be no hope of a peace with the English. Nevertheless, there was a rumor recently because of some conjecture about a Dutch envoy who was sent to France, and also because the people of Overijssel, who are trying with all their might to bring in the prince of Orange, had dreamed up a way to do this: they would send the prince to England as a mediator. (Many think this is more to spite the Hol-
25 landers than for their own advantage.) But the reality is quite different. For the moment the Hollanders do not even dream of peace—unless it should turn out that they can buy peace with money.

There is still doubt about the plans of the Swede. Most think that
30 his objective is Mainz; some think the Hollanders. But these are only conjectures.

I wrote this letter last week, but I could not send it because the weather prevented me from going to The Hague. That is the disadvantage of living in a village. Rarely do I receive a letter without delay, for unless by some chance there is an opportunity to send it to me immediately,
35 a week or two passes before I receive it. And it is not unusual for some [IV/176] difficulty to arise when I want to send a letter. So when you see that I do not reply to you as promptly as I ought to, you should not think that this comes from my forgetting you. Meanwhile, the time presses me to

44. Wolf 1966 (p. 423) contends that if Spinoza had tried to learn more about what Huygens was doing in this area, he probably would not have been able to, since Huygens was interested more in finding out what Spinoza was doing than in sharing the results of his own work. Cf. Huygens' letters to Constantijn, his brother, in Huygens 1888–1950, VI, 151, 168, 215. Huygens mentions Spinoza several times in his correspondence, usually referring to him as “the Jew of Voorburg” or “our Israelite.” Sometimes he expresses admiration for Spinoza's skill as a lensgrinder (VI, 155, 158) and sometimes criticism of his theories (VI, 148, 164, 205). Wolf (1966) gives a clear account of the device Huygens constructed.

45. In Aesop's fable of the fox and the goat, the fox fell into a well and lured the goat in with him by telling her he expected a drought. When the goat joined him in the well, he used her body as a ladder on which to climb out.

bring this letter to a conclusion. I shall write about the other things on another occasion. For now I can only ask you to convey my warmest
5 greetings to the most Noble Mr. Boyle, and to remember me, who am

Yours with all affection,

B. de Spinoza

Voorburg, November 1665

P.S.: I should like to know whether all the astronomers judge that
10 there were two comets from their motion, or in order to preserve Kepler's hypothesis.⁴⁶ Farewell.]

To: Mr. Henry Oldenburg, Secretary of the Royal Society, in the Pall Mall, in St. James' fields, in London

LETTER 33 (OP)

HENRY OLDENBURG TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED
GENTLEMAN B. D. S.

Most excellent sir, Dearest friend,

25 Your philosophical account of the agreement of the parts of Nature with the whole, and their connection, is very pleasing, although I do not
[IV/177] sufficiently follow how we can eliminate the order and symmetry from nature, as you seem to do, especially since you yourself recognize that all its bodies are surrounded by others, and are mutually determined, in a definite and constant manner, both to existing and producing an
5 effect with the same ratio of motion to rest always being preserved in all together. This seems to be the formal ground itself of a true order.

But perhaps I don't sufficiently understand you here, any more than I did in what you wrote previously about Descartes' Rules. If only you were willing to take the trouble to explain to me thoroughly in what respect you judge that both Descartes and Huygens are mistaken about
10 the rules of motion. You would please me very much by doing me this favor, which I would indeed do my best to deserve.

I was not present when Mr. Huygens performed his Experiments here in London, proving his Hypothesis. In the meantime, I understand that, among other experiments, someone suspended a one pound ball in the manner of a pendulum, which was then released, striking another
15 ball suspended in the same way (but weighing only half a pound) from

46. AHW report that at this time people still thought comets moved in a straight line. So there was often doubt whether two comet phenomena perceived in close succession were caused by the same comet.

an angle of forty degrees. Huygens had predicted, after making a brief Algebraic Calculation, what the effect would be, and the effect was exactly as he had predicted. A certain distinguished Gentleman,⁴⁷ who is now away, had proposed many such Experiments, which Huygens
 20 is said to have solved. As soon as I have the opportunity to see him, perhaps I will explain this matter to you more fully and precisely.

Meanwhile I urge you once again not to decline the request I made above. Furthermore, if you know anything about Huygens' success in polishing Telescopic Lenses, please don't be reluctant to share it with me. Now that, by the grace of God, the plague is markedly less
 25 virulent, I hope that our Royal Society will return to London shortly and resume its weekly meetings. If anything worthy of note happens there, you can be assured that I will certainly communicate it to you.

Previously I had mentioned some Anatomical Observations. Mr. Boyle
 20 (who greets you very graciously) wrote me not long ago that some distinguished Anatomists at Oxford had assured him that they had found the Windpipe—both of certain Sheep and of Oxen—filled with grass, and that a few weeks ago these Anatomists were invited to examine
 35 an Ox which for two or three days had almost continuously held its
 [IV/178] neck stiff and upright, and had died of an illness which its owners were completely unfamiliar with. When they dissected the parts relating to the neck and throat, they found, to their surprise, that its Windpipe, deep inside the trunk itself, was filled with grass, as if someone had forced it in. This suggested a good reason to ask two questions: how
 5 did such a large quantity of grass get there? And when it was there, how could an animal of this kind survive so long?⁴⁸

In addition, the same Friend has told me that a certain inquisitive Doctor, also at Oxford, has found Milk in human blood. He relates that
 10 a girl who had had a rather large breakfast at seven in the morning was bled in the foot at eleven on the same day. The first blood was collected in a Dish and after a short time took on a white color; but the later blood flowed into a smaller vessel, which (unless I'm mistaken) they call an *acetabulum* (in English, a sawcer), where it immediately took
 15 the form of a cake of milk. Five or six hours later the Doctor returned and inspected both samples of blood. The sample in the Dish was half blood, but half chyleform, and this chyle floated in the blood, like whey

47. Oldenburg 1965, II, 637, suggests that this was probably Christopher Wren, who in addition to being an architect of note, was also a scientist and a founder of the Royal Society. Cf. Oldenburg 1965, II, 624.

48. These observations were reported in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, no. 6 (6 November 1665), but Wolf thinks the anatomists (Josiah Clark and Richard Lower) must have been mistaken in what they reported. See Wolf 1966, 427–28.

20 in milk. But the sample in the saucer was all chyle, without any appearance of blood. And when he heated each of them separately over a fire, both liquids became hard. But the girl was quite well, and was bled only because she had never had her period, although she had a healthy color.⁴⁹

But I pass to Politics. Here there is a rumor on everyone's lips that
25 the Israelites, who have been scattered for more than two thousand years, will return to their Native Land.⁵⁰ Few here believe this, though many desire it.⁵¹ Please tell your friend what you hear and think about this. For my part, so long as this News is not reported by trustworthy Men from the City of Constantinople, to whom this matter is of the
30 Greatest concern, I cannot trust it. I'm eager to know what the Jews in Amsterdam have heard about this matter, and how they are affected by such an important report, which, if it should be true, seems that it will lead to⁵² a sudden Overturning of everything in the World.

[NS: As yet there seems to be no hope of Peace between England
35 and the Netherlands.]

[IV/179] Explain, if you can, what the Swede and the Brandenburger are trying to do. And believe me to be

Your most devoted,

Henry Oldenburg

London, 8 December 1665

5 P.S. Soon, God willing, I shall tell you what our Philosophers think about the recent Comets.

49. This observation was also reported in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, no. 6. According to Wolf, the "milk" was a whitish or gray plasma which is usually mixed with the blood, but rises to the top when blood is left to sit. AHW suggest that this might be explained by a higher than usual protein content in the blood.

50. This hope had been aroused by Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676), a Jew living in the Ottoman Empire who proclaimed himself the Messiah. Despite rabbinic opposition he was able to attract financial backing and a wide following. In 1665 one of his followers, Nathan of Gaza, who claimed to be the risen Elijah, and the precursor of the Messiah, prophesied that in the following year Israel (then part of the Ottoman Empire) would be restored to the Jews and the Messianic era would begin. This fit widespread expectations of both Jewish and Christian millenarians. There was, in fact, considerable enthusiasm for Zevi in Amsterdam. On this see Nadler 1999, 249–54. Early in 1666 Zevi was imprisoned in Constantinople, where, under pressure, he converted to Islam. His apostasy cost him much of his following, though some found ways to justify it and the movement continued for many years after his death. The classic study is Scholem 1974. Although our record of correspondence between Oldenburg and Spinoza is about to be interrupted for nearly ten years—which may explain why we do not have a letter in which Spinoza replies to Oldenburg's questions about Zevi—what he might have said may perhaps be inferred from two passages in the TTP, i, 7 (III/16); iii, 55 (III/57).

51. Christian millenarians hoped for the return of the Jews to Israel in 1666, as a sign of the Second Coming.

52. OP, Gebhardt: *induturus*. NS: *zal meebrengen*. AHW read: *induturus*, which is what I translate.

LETTER 34, TO HUDDE

LETTER 34 (OP)

TO THE MOST ESTEEMED AND WISE MR. JOHANNES HUDDE
FROM B. D. S.

Version

Most Esteemed Sir,

Till now other business has prevented me from sending you what you asked for, and I undertook to provide, a demonstration of the Unity
15 of God⁵³ from the fact that his Nature involves necessary existence. To do now what I promised, I shall presuppose that:

(1) The true definition of each thing contains nothing beyond the simple nature of the thing defined.

From this it follows that

20 (2) No definition involves or expresses any multiplicity or any definite number of individuals since it involves or expresses nothing but the nature of the thing, as it is in itself.

For example, the Definition of a triangle contains nothing but the simple nature of the triangle, not some definite number of triangles, just as the
25 definition of the Mind, that it is a thinking thing, or the definition of God, that he is a perfect Being, contains nothing but the nature of the Mind, or of God. It does not contain a definite number of Minds or Gods.

30 (3) There must necessarily be a positive cause of each existing thing, through which it exists.

[IV/180] (4) That this cause must be affirmed to exist either in the nature and definition of the thing itself—because existence pertains to its nature, or its nature necessarily contains existence—or outside the thing.

From these presuppositions it follows that if some definite number of
5 individuals exists in nature, there must be one or more causes which were able to produce precisely that number of Individuals, neither more nor fewer. For example, if twenty men exist in nature—to avoid all confusion I shall suppose that they exist together and without predecessors in nature—it will not be sufficient, to give a reason why the twenty exist,
10 to investigate the cause of human nature in general. What must also be investigated is the reason why neither more nor fewer than twenty

53. The argument which follows closely parallels the argument Spinoza gives in E I P8S2, with the interesting exception that this argument leads to the conclusion that there cannot be a plurality of Gods, whereas the argument in E I P8S2 leads to the conclusion that there cannot be a plurality of substances of the same nature.

men exist. For (according to the third hypothesis)⁵⁴ concerning each man a reason and cause must be given why he exists. But (according to the second and third hypotheses) that cause cannot be contained in
 15 the nature of the man himself, for the true definition of man does not involve the number of twenty men. Therefore (according to the fourth hypothesis), the cause of the existence of these twenty men, and hence of each of them separately, must exist outside them.

Hence we must conclude, without qualification, that all those things
 20 which are conceived to exist as many in number, necessarily result from external causes, and are not produced by the force of their own nature. But since (according to the second hypothesis) necessary existence pertains to the Nature of God, it is necessary that his true definition should contain his necessary existence. And for that reason his necessary
 25 existence is to be inferred from his true definition. But from his true definition (as I have already demonstrated previously from the second and third hypotheses) the necessary existence of many Gods cannot be inferred. There follows, therefore, only the existence of one God. Q.E.D.

This, most Esteemed Sir, is the Method which seemed best to me at
 30 this time to demonstrate the proposition. Previously I demonstrated it in a different way, using the distinction between Essence and Existence. But because I noted what you said to me, I was quite happy to send you this demonstration. I hope you will find it satisfactory, and I shall await your judgment on it. In the meantime I remain, etc.

Voorburg, 7 January 1666

[IV/181]

LETTER 35 (OP)

TO THE MOST ESTEEMED AND WISE JOHANNES HUDDÉ
 FROM B. D. S.

5

Version

Most Esteemed Sir,

In your last letter, written on 30 March, you have cleared up very nicely what was somewhat obscure to me in your earlier letter, of 10 February. Since I know, therefore, what your own opinion is, I shall
 10 pose the state of the Question as you conceive it: namely, whether there is only one Being which subsists by its own sufficiency or power? Not only do I affirm this, I also undertake to demonstrate it from the fact

54. OP: *hypothesis*. NS: *onderstelling*. Similarly for the other occurrences of *hypothesis* in the Latin versions of this correspondence. See the Glossary entry HYPOTHESIS.

that his nature involves necessary existence—although it can also be demonstrated very easily either from God’s intellect (as I showed in P11
 15 of my *Geometric Demonstrations of Descartes’ “Principles”*) or from God’s other attributes. So to undertake this task I shall first show briefly what properties a being possessing necessary existence must have, namely:

20 (1) That it is eternal. For if a limited duration were attributed to it, that Being would be conceived as not existing beyond that limited duration, or as not involving necessary existence, which would be contrary to its definition.

25 (2) That it is simple, and not composed of parts. For component parts must be prior in nature and knowledge to what is composed of them. In a being eternal by its nature this cannot be.

(3) That it is not limited, but can be conceived only as infinite. For if the nature of that Being were limited, and also were conceived as limited, that
 30 nature would be conceived as not existing outside those limits, which would also be contrary to its definition.

[IV/182] (4) That it is indivisible. For if it were divisible, it could be divided into parts, either of the same or of a different nature. If the latter, it could be destroyed, and so could fail to exist, which is contrary to its definition. If the former, each part would involve necessary existence through itself, and
 5 in this way one could exist, and consequently be conceived, without the other, for that reason, that Nature could be grasped as finite, which (by the preceding proposition) is contrary to the definition.

From this we see that if we want to ascribe any imperfection to a Being of this kind, we shall immediately fall into a contradiction. For whether the
 10 imperfection we want to feign in such a Nature is located in some defect or certain limits which a Nature of that kind would possess, or in some change which it could undergo from external causes, by some lack of power, we are always reduced to this: that that Nature which involves necessary existence
 15 does not exist, or does not exist necessarily. For that reason I conclude

(5) that whatever involves necessary existence cannot have in it any imperfection, but must express pure perfection.

Next,

20 (6) since the only possible result of perfection is that a Being exists by its own sufficiency and power, it follows that if we suppose that a Being which does not express all perfections exists of its own nature, we must also suppose that that Being also exists which comprehends in itself all perfections. For if a Being endowed with a lesser power exists by its own sufficiency, how
 25 much more must another endowed with a greater power.

To come finally to the point, I affirm that there can only be one Being whose existence pertains to its nature, namely, only that Being

which has all perfections in itself, and which I call God. For if a Being
30 is affirmed to whose nature existence pertains, that Being must contain
no imperfection in itself, but must express every perfection (by proposi-
tion 5). And therefore the nature of that Being must pertain to God
(who, by proposition 6, we must also hold exists), because he has all
35 perfections, and no imperfections, in him. Nor can it exist outside of
[IV/183] God. For if it did, one and the same Nature which involves necessary
existence would exist in two forms, which according to the preceding
demonstration is absurd. Therefore, nothing outside God, but God
alone involves necessary existence. This is what was to be Demonstrated.

These, most Esteemed Sir, are the things I can produce now to
demonstrate this point. I would like also to be permitted to demonstrate
to you that I am, etc.

B. d. S.

Voorburg, 10 April 1666

LETTER 36 (OP)

TO THE MOST ESTEEMED AND WISE MR. JOHANNES HUDDE
FROM B. D. S.

Version

Most Esteemed Sir,

I have not been able to respond more quickly to your letter of
19 May (because of some obstacle). Because I see that for the most part
you are suspending judgment about the demonstration I sent you—I
think because of the obscurity you find in it—I shall try to explain its
meaning more clearly here.

20 First, I enumerated four properties which a Being existing by its own
sufficiency or power must have. These four, and the others like them,
I reduced to one in the fifth proposition. Next, to deduce everything
necessary for the demonstration only from the given supposition,⁵⁵ I
tried in the sixth proposition to demonstrate God's existence. And from
25 that, finally, presupposing as known nothing more than the simple
meaning of words, I inferred the conclusion sought.

This, briefly, was what I proposed; this was my aim. Now I shall
explain separately the meaning of each step, and I shall begin with the
properties set out first.

55. OP: *hypothesi*. NS: *onderstelling*.

[IV/184] You do not find any difficulty in the first proposition. And it is nothing but an Axiom, as is the second also. For by “simple” I understand nothing but what is not composite, whether it is composed of parts differing in nature or of parts agreeing in nature. The demonstration
5 is certainly universal.

You have perceived very well the meaning of the third, as far as this is concerned: that if the Being is thought, then it cannot be conceived to be limited⁵⁶ in thought, but only unlimited,⁵⁷ and similarly, if it is Extension, it cannot be conceived to be limited in extension. But you say that you do not perceive the conclusion, which nevertheless
10 rests on this: that it is a contradiction to conceive something whose definition involves existence (or what is the same, affirms existence) under a negation of existence. And since the limited denotes nothing positive, but only the privation of the existence of the same nature which is conceived as limited, it follows that something whose definition
15 affirms existence cannot be conceived as limited. For example, if the term *extension* involves necessary existence, it will be as impossible to conceive extension without existence as it is to conceive extension without extension. And if this is maintained, it will also be impossible to conceive a limited extension. For if it were conceived to be limited,
20 it would have to be limited by its own nature, namely, by extension. And this extension by which it was limited would have to be conceived under the negation of existence. But by hypothesis, this is a manifest contradiction.

In the fourth proposition all I wanted to show was that such a being
25 cannot be divided into parts, either of the same or of a different nature, whether those of a different nature involve necessary existence or not. For, I said, if the latter were the case, it could be destroyed, since to destroy a thing is to separate it into parts of the same kind so that none of them expresses the nature of the whole. But if the former were the
30 case, that would be inconsistent with the three properties already proven.

In the fifth I presupposed only that perfection consists in *being* and imperfection in the privation of being. I say *privation*, for although extension, for example, may deny thought of itself, this in itself is not
[IV/185] an imperfection in it. But if it were deprived of extension, that would show an imperfection in it, as would really be the case if it were limited. Similarly if it lacked duration, position, etc.

56. OP: *determinatum*. NS: *bepaalt*. By translating these terms as I have, here and elsewhere in this letter, I've tried to respect the fact that the text does not say *finitum* or *eindig*. But I think both terms here mean *finite*.

57. OP: *indeterminatum*. NS: *oneindig*.

You concede the sixth without reservation, and nevertheless you
 5 say that your difficulty—namely, why there could not be many beings,
 existing through themselves, but differing in nature, just as thought and
 extension are different, and can perhaps subsist by their own sufficiency—
 remains untouched. I can only judge from this that you understand it
 in a sense very different from mine. I trust I see in what sense you
 10 understand it. Still, not to lose time, I shall just explain my meaning.

I say, then, as far as the sixth proposition is concerned, that if we
 assert that something which is only unlimited in its own kind,⁵⁸ and
 perfect, exists by its own sufficiency, the existence of a being absolutely
 unlimited and perfect will also have to be conceded. This Being I call
 15 God. For example, if we want to maintain that extension or thought
 (each of which can be perfect in its own kind, that is, in a definite kind
 of being) exists by its own sufficiency, we will also have to concede the
 existence of God, who is absolutely perfect, that is, of an absolutely
 unlimited being.

Here I should like you to note what I said just now about the term
 20 *imperfection*, namely, that it signifies that something is lacking to a thing
 which pertains to its nature. For example, Extension can be called
 imperfect only in relation to duration, position or quantity, because
 it does not last longer, or does not keep its position, or is not larger.
 25 But it will never be called imperfect because it does not think, since
 its nature, which consists only in extension, that is, in a definite kind
 of being, requires nothing of that sort. In this respect only limited or
 unlimited extension is to be called imperfect or perfect, respectively. And
 since the nature of God does not consist in a definite kind of being,
 30 but in a Being which is absolutely unlimited, his nature also requires
 everything which expresses *being* perfectly, since otherwise his nature
 would be limited and deficient.

Since these things are so, it follows that there can only be one Being,
 God, which exists by its own force. For if we assert, for example, that
 [IV/186] extension involves existence, it must be eternal and unlimited, expressing
 absolutely no imperfection, but only perfection. Therefore, Extension
 will pertain to God, or it will be something which expresses God's
 nature in some way. For God is a being which is, not just in a certain
 respect, but absolutely unlimited in being⁵⁹ and omnipotent. And this,
 5 which is said of Extension (as an arbitrary example), will also have to
 be affirmed of everything we want to maintain as having such a nature.

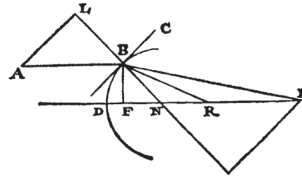
58. OP: *in suo genere solummodo indeterminatum*. NS: *slechts in zijn geslacht oneindig*.

59. The OP has *essentia*, essence. But the NS has *wezen* in the text and *esse* in the margin. I'm inclined to think that it is best to translate this as "being."

I conclude, then, as in my preceding Letter, that nothing outside God, but only God, subsists by its own sufficiency. I believe these things suffice to explain the meaning of the preceding letter. But you will be
 10 able to judge better than I concerning that.

With that I might finish. But because I intend to have new dishes made for polishing lenses, I'd like to get your advice about this. I do not see what we gain by grinding convex-concave lenses. On the contrary, if I have calculated properly, convex-plane ought to be more
 15 useful. For if we suppose (for convenience sake) that the refractive index⁶⁰ is 3 to 2, and add letters in the figure below as you place them in your little Dioptrics,⁶¹ we will find, when the equation is set out, that NI (which is called z) = $\sqrt{\frac{9}{4}z^2 - x^2} - \sqrt{1 - x^2}$.⁶² From this it follows that if
 $x = 0$, z will = 2, which is then also the longest.⁶³ And if $x = \frac{3}{5}$, then z
 20 will = $\frac{43}{25}$ or a little more, that is, if we suppose that the ray BI does not undergo a second refraction when it goes from the lens toward I.

But let us now suppose that when the ray proceeds from the lens, it
 25 is refracted on the plane surface BF, and goes, not toward I, but toward R. Then when the lines BI and BR are in the same ratio as the refractive index, i.e.
 30 (as is supposed here), 3 to 2, and when we then apply your equation, the result will be that $NR = \sqrt{[x^2 - x^2]} - \sqrt{[1 - x^2]}$. And if again, as before, we let $x = 0$, NR will = 1, that is, it will equal half the diameter. But if $x = \frac{3}{5}$,
 NR will = $\frac{20}{25} + \frac{1}{50}$.



This shows that this focal length will be shorter than the other, although the optic tube is shorter by a whole half the diameter. So
 [IV/187] if we were to make a Telescope as long as DI, by making the half-diameter = to $\frac{1}{2}$, with the aperture BF remained the same, the focal length would be much less.

60. The ratio of the sine of the angle of incidence to the sine of the angle of refraction when light passes from one medium to another. That this ratio was constant for any two media was one of Descartes' principal discoveries in optics. (The Dutch mathematician Willebrord Snell had made the same discovery some years before Descartes, but this was not known until Christiaan Huygens published his *Treatise on Light* in 1690.)

61. Once thought lost, this work was rediscovered and published in Vermij and Atzema 1995. For a brief but helpful discussion, see Dijksterhuis 2004, 70–72.

62. I've modernized the symbols which Spinoza uses to express this equation. He uses a now obsolete symbol for equality, and doubles a variable to indicate that it is squared.

63. I.e. (acc. to Appuhn), which is the greatest length z can attain. Appuhn takes x to refer to the line BF, but contends that Spinoza makes a mistake in supposing that x here might be taken to = 0. Appuhn takes Spinoza to be right, however, in concluding that the spherical aberration of a plane-convex lens is less than that for a convex-concave lens.

Moreover, the reason convex-concave lenses please me less is that,
 5 apart from the fact that they require twice the labor and expense, since
 their rays are not all directed toward the same point, they never fall
 perpendicularly on a concave surface. But I have no doubt that you
 have already considered these things before, and made more accurate
 calculations, and finally settled the matter. So I ask your judgment and
 10 advice about this matter, etc.

[Voorburg, June 1666]

LETTER 37 (OP)

TO THE VERY LEARNED AND EXPERIENCED
 MR. JOHANNES BOUWMEESTER
 FROM B. D. S.⁶⁴

15 Most Learned Sir, special Friend,⁶⁵

I have not been able till now to reply to your last letter, which I
 received some time ago. I have been so hindered by various affairs and
 worries that only after much effort have I been able to free myself.
 However, since I am now granted a little relief, I don't want to fail
 20 in my duty, but I want to thank you as warmly as I can for your love
 and courtesy to me, which you have quite often demonstrated by
 your actions, but have now also shown more than sufficiently by your
 letter, etc.⁶⁶

I pass now to your question, which is: *whether there is, or could be, a*
 [IV/188a] *Method which would enable us to proceed, without either obstruction or weariness,*
in thinking about the most excellent things? Or whether our minds, like
our bodies, are also subject to chance events and our thoughts are governed
more by fortune than by skill? I think I will do what is needed if I show
 5 that there must, necessarily, be a Method by which we can direct and
 link our clear and distinct perceptions, and that the intellect is not
 subject, as the body is, to accidents.

This is evident simply from this: that one clear and distinct percep-
 tion, or many together, can be absolutely the cause of another clear
 10 and distinct perception. Indeed, all the clear and distinct perceptions
 we form can arise only from other clear and distinct perceptions in
 us, and cannot have any other cause outside us.⁶⁷ From this it follows

64. In the OP and NS Bouwmeester is identified only by his initials. In C: *B. de Spinoza greets one of his many friends, Mr. N.N.*

65. C: *Dearest and honored friend.*

66. This initial paragraph is not in C.

67. The phrase "outside us" (*extra nos*) is not in C.

that the clear and distinct perceptions we form depend only on our
 15 nature, and its definite, fixed laws, that is, on our absolute power, not
 on fortune (that is, on causes which, although they too act according
 to definite and fixed laws, are nevertheless unknown to us and foreign
 to our nature and power). As for the rest of our perceptions, I confess
 that they depend on fortune in the highest degree.

From these considerations, then, it is clearly evident what the true
 20 Method must be like, and in what it chiefly consists: namely, solely
 [IV/189a] in the knowledge of the pure intellect, and of its nature and laws.⁶⁸
 To acquire this it is necessary above all else to distinguish between
 the intellect and the imagination, *or* between true ideas and the rest,
 namely, the fictitious, the false, the doubtful, and absolutely all those
 5 which depend only on the memory. To understand these things, at
 least as far as the Method requires, it is not necessary to know the
 nature of the mind through its first cause, but it is sufficient to put
 together a little history of the mind, *or* of perceptions, in the way
 Bacon teaches.

With these few words I think I have explained and demonstrated
 the true Method, and at the same time, shown the Way by which we
 10 may arrive at it. I should, however, still warn you that all these things
 require uninterrupted meditation, and a constant mind and purpose.
 To acquire these it is necessary above all to decide upon a definite way
 and principle of living, and to prescribe a definite end for oneself. But
 enough of these things for now.⁶⁹

Voorburg, 10 June 1666

[IV/190a]

LETTER 38 (NS)

TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED MR. JOHANNES VAN DER MEER
 FROM B. D. S.

Sir,

While I find myself isolated here in the country, I've been thinking
 about the problem you raised, and I've found it very simple. The general

68. OP: *ejusque naturae & legume*. C: *ejusque Naturae legum*, of the laws of its Nature. In AHW, 479, Akkerman comments that the difference in phrasing does not indicate a difference in meaning: "Trying to indicate the 'being' or 'essence' of things as exactly as possible in words, Spinoza continually uses different formulations . . . e.g., to express in words the 'being' of blood, he uses . . . : (1) *natura sanguinis*, (2) *leges sanguinis*, (3) *leges sive natura sanguinis*, (4) *leges naturae sanguinis*, (5) *leges et natura sanguinis*, (6) *natura sive definitio sanguinis*, (7) *essentia aut natura sanguinis*."

69. C adds the following at the end: "Farewell, and love him who loves you from his heart, Bened. de Spinoza."

proof rests on this: that a person is playing fairly if his expectation⁷⁰
 10 of winning or losing is equal to that of his opponent. This *expectation*
 consists of the chance and the money the opponents stake and risk.
 That is, if the chance is equal on each side, then each player must also
 stake and risk equally much money. But if the chance is unequal, then
 15 one player must stake and put up more money in proportion as his
 chance of winning is greater. In that way the expectation of each will
 be equal, and as a result, the game will be fair.

For example: if A is playing against B, and has two chances of winning
 and only one of losing, and on the other hand, B has only one chance
 20 of winning, and two of losing, it's clear that A must risk as much for
 [IV/191a] each of his two chances as B does for his [one]. That is, A must risk
 twice as much as B does.

To show this still more clearly, we'll suppose that three people, A,
 B, and C, play together with equal chances of winning, and that each
 wagers an equal amount of money. It is evident that because each stakes
 5 an equal amount of money, each also risks only 1/3 [of the total staked]
 to win 2/3, and that because each one plays against two, each also has
 only one chance to win, against two chances of losing. If we suppose
 that one of these three, say, C, departs before they have begun to play,
 it is evident that he ought to receive only what he staked—that is, a
 10 1/3 part—and that if B wants to buy C's expectation, and take his place,
 he must stake as much as C has withdrawn. A cannot object, because
 it makes no difference to him whether with one chance he must take
 on two chances of two different men, or two chances of only one man.

15 If we maintain this, it follows that if someone sticks out his hand
 for another man to guess one of two numbers, where he wins a certain
 sum if he guesses right, and loses an equal sum if he guesses wrong,
 [IV/192a] I say that the expectation is equal for each of them, that is, as much

70. NS: *kans*. OP: *sortem seu expectationem*. I adopt “expectation” as my translation of *kans* wherever it seems clear to me that Spinoza is thinking about a quantity which is a function both of the probability of winning and of the amount of money staked. I use “chance” where it seems to me that he is thinking just about a probability. Spinoza doesn't seem to be consistent in his terminology for dealing with these problems. Normally he uses *kans* when he's speaking about a function of probability and utility, and *lot* when he's just talking about a probability. In IV/191/14, however, *kans* seems to be used for a simple probability. Modern probability theory was in its infancy in this period, the first important work on mathematical expectation having been done by Huygens in *Calculating in Games of Chance* (1657). For discussion, see Hacking 1975, ch. 11. As Hacking points out (personal correspondence): “Because of the Dutch practice of raising money by selling annuities, probability calculations were of immense practical interest to the state and its statesmen, and involved anyone interested in politics, with the de Witts, among others, being actively engaged. Questions about gaming were not just topics for gentlemen's amusements.”

[IV/192a] for the one who sticks out his hand as for the one who must guess. Furthermore, if he sticks out his hand for another to guess in one opportunity one of three numbers, where he wins a certain sum if he guesses the number, but loses half that sum if he doesn't guess it, the
5 expectation for each will be equal.

Similarly, the expectation will also be equal on each side if the one who sticks out his hand gives the other person two opportunities to guess, where if he guesses correctly, he wins a certain sum, and if he fails, he loses twice that amount. The expectation is also equal if he gives
10 him three opportunities to guess one of four numbers, to win a certain sum, or on the contrary, to lose three times that amount. Similarly, if he gives him four opportunities to guess one of five numbers, to win one sum, or lose four times that amount, etc.

From all this it follows that it's the same for the one who sticks out
15 his hand and invites a guess, whether the other guesses as many times as he wants to, which of several numbers is the one, provided the one who guesses stakes and risks an amount proportional to the number of times he tries to guess, divided by the sum of the numbers. For example, if there are five numbers, and he can only guess once, then
20 he must risk only $1/5$ against the other's $4/5$. If he will guess twice, [IV/193a] then he must risk $2/5$ against the other's $3/5$. If three times, then $3/5$ against the other's $2/5$, and so on— $4/5$ against the other's $1/5$ and $5/5$ against $0/5$. Consequently, it's the same for the one who offers the bet, if he, for example, risks $1/6$ of the total stake to win $5/6$, whether
25 one man guesses five times, or five men guess once each. This was the problem you raised.

1 October 1666

[IV/193b]

LETTER 39 (NS)

TO THE MOST WORTHY AND WISE MR. JARIG JELLES
FROM B. D. S.

Dear Friend,⁷¹

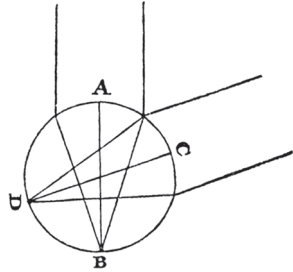
Various problems have prevented my replying to your letter more quickly. I've examined what you noted concerning Descartes' *Dioptric*.⁷²
30 He does not consider any other cause for larger or smaller images being formed at the base of the eye than the crossing of the rays which

71. NS: *Waarde Vriend*. The OP salutation is more formal: *Humanissime Vir*, Most Worthy Sir.

72. At issue in this letter is the Eighth Discourse in Descartes' *Dioptric*. Descartes held that hyperbolic and elliptical lenses were preferable to any others we might conceive of.

[IV/194b] come from different points on the object, that is, as they begin to cross
 25 each other nearer to or further from the eye, without attending to the
 size of the angle the rays make when they cross each other on the
 surface of the eye. And although this last cause is the chief one to be
 noted in telescopes, it seems, nevertheless, that he wanted to pass over
 30 it in silence, because (as it seems) he did not know any means of col-
 lecting those rays, which proceed in parallel from different points into
 so many other points, and for that reason he could not determine that
 angle mathematically.

Perhaps he kept silent so as not to ever
 prefer the circle to the other figures he
 35 introduced. For it is certain that in this
 [IV/195b] respect the circle is superior to all the other
 figures one can discover. Because the circle
 is the same everywhere, it has the same
 properties everywhere. For example, the
 circle ABCD has this property, that all the
 15 rays parallel to the axis, AB, coming from
 the side of A, are refracted at its surface in
 such a way that afterward they all come together in the point B. Simi-
 larly, all the rays parallel to the axis CD, coming from the side of C,
 are so refracted on its surface that they all meet in the point D.⁷³ This
 20 cannot be said of any other figure although hyperbolas and ellipses
 have infinite diameters.



So the situation is as you write. If we attended only to the length
 of the eye or of the Telescope, we would be forced to make very long
 25 Telescopes before we could see things on the moon as distinctly as we
 do those on earth. But as I said, the chief thing is the size of the angle
 which rays proceeding from different points make on the surface of the
 30 eye when they cross there. And this angle is also larger or smaller as
 the foci of the lenses arranged in the Telescope differ more or less. If
 you'd like to see a demonstration of this, I'm ready to send it to you,
 when you please.

Voorburg, 3 March 1667

73. In the OP this sentence is made the consequent of a condition which has the preceding sentence as its antecedent: "If the circle ABCD has this property, that all the rays parallel to the axis, AB, coming from the side of A, are refracted at its surface in such a way that afterward they all come together in point B, all the rays parallel to the axis CD, coming from side C, etc."

LETTER 40, TO JELLES

LETTER 40 (NS)

TO THE MOST WORTHY AND WISE MR. JARIG JELLES
FROM B. D. S.

[IV/196b] Dear Friend,⁷⁴

I did receive your last letter, of the 14th of this month, but various
20 obstacles have prevented me from being able to answer earlier.

Concerning the Helvetius affair,⁷⁵ I spoke about it with Mr. Vossius,⁷⁶
who—not to relate in a letter everything we talked about—laughed heart-
25 ily and was surprised that I would ask him about these trifles. However,
not thinking this of any importance, I went to the Silversmith,⁷⁷ a man
named Brechtelt, who had tested the gold. He took quite a different
view than Vossius had, saying that in the smelting and the separation
the gold had increased and become heavier by an amount equal to
30 the weight of the silver he had put into the crucible for separation. So
[IV/197b] he firmly believed that the gold which transmuted his silver into gold
had something special in it. And he was not the only one to think this:
various other Gentlemen present at the time agreed.

20 After this I went to Helvetius himself, who showed me the gold
and the crucible, coated with gold on the inside, and told me that he
had thrown into the molten lead hardly a fourth of a grain of barley
or mustard seed. He added that he would soon publish an account of
25 the whole business, and said further that someone—he thought it was
the same man who had been with him—had done the same thing in
Amsterdam. Doubtless you will have heard about this. This is all I have
been able to learn about this matter.

74. NS: *Waarde Vriend*. OP: *Humanissime Vir*.

75. Johannes Fridericus Helvetius, physician to the Prince of Orange, published an account of his alchemical experiments in Amsterdam in 1667. Later he wrote against both Descartes and Spinoza (*Philosophica theologica contra Cartesii et Spinosae theologiam philosophicam*, 1680).

76. Isaac Vossius (1618–1689), Dutch humanist now best known as a collector of books and manuscripts, who became court librarian for Queen Christina in 1648. In his own day he was also renowned for his knowledge of ancient and modern languages and for his controversial biblical scholarship (*De septuaginta interpretibus*, 1661), which argued that the Septuagint was divinely inspired throughout and more reliable than the ancient Hebrew text of the Bible. He left Sweden after Christina's abdication in 1654, returned to Holland for some years, and eventually went to England in 1670, where he received a degree in civil law and became a canon at Windsor in 1673, a post he held until shortly before his death. He is reported to have refused the sacrament on his deathbed, until reminded that this would reflect unfavorably on the canons of Windsor. For more, see Katz 1993.

77. NS: *Silversmit*. OP: *aurificem*, goldsmith. Note that, unlike Vossius, Spinoza does not dismiss Helvetius' claims out of hand. Some have thought that this showed credulity on his part. It is worth pointing out, then, that Boyle, Huygens, and Newton all took seriously the possibility of transforming baser metals into gold. See Klever 1987.

30 The author of that little book you write about—in which he boasts that he has demonstrated the falsity of the arguments Descartes offers in the third and fifth⁷⁸ Meditations, by which he demonstrates the existence of God—will certainly fight with his own shadow, and harm
 35 himself more than others. Descartes' axiom, I confess, is somewhat
 [IV/198b] obscure and confused, as you too have noted; he would have spoken more clearly and truly if he had said: *that the power of thinking to think about things, or to conceive them, is not greater than the power of nature*
 20 *for existing and producing effects*. This is a clear and true axiom, from which God's existence follows very clearly and validly. This Author's argument, which you recount, shows clearly enough that he doesn't yet understand the matter. It is indeed true that we can proceed to
 25 infinity if the problem is solved in this way in all its parts. Otherwise it is great foolishness.

Suppose, for example, someone asks by what cause a limited body of this kind moves? We can reply that it has been determined to such motion by another body, and this again by another, and so on to infin-
 30 ity. We are free to give this reply, I say, because it is a question only about motion, and by continually supposing another body, we give a sufficient and eternal cause of that motion. But if I see in the hands of an ordinary person an elegantly written book, full of excellent thoughts,
 [IV/199b] and I ask him where he got such a book, and he replies that he copied it from another book of another ordinary person, who also could
 35 write elegantly, and he proceeds in this way to infinity, he will not satisfy me. For I wasn't asking only about the shape and order of the letters (which was all he was replying about). I was also asking about the thoughts and the meaning their composition indicates. He does not give me any answer to that question by proceeding in this way to infinity. How this can be applied to ideas can easily be seen from what
 20 I have explained in the ninth axiom of my geometric demonstration of Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*.⁷⁹

I proceed now to reply to your other letter, dated 9 March, in which you ask for a further explanation of what I had written in my preceding
 30 letter [Letter 39] about a circular shape. You will easily be able to grasp this, provided you notice, please, that all the rays which are assumed to be parallel when they strike the first lens of the Telescope are not really parallel, because they all come from one and the same
 35 point. But we treat them as parallel because the object is so far from

78. Thus the NS. The OP has (incorrectly): *quarta*, fourth.

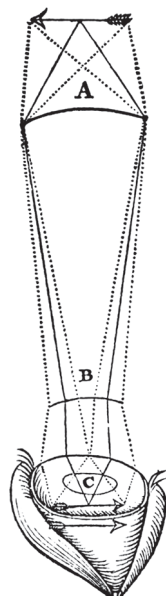
79. Cf. I/156–57, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, pp. 244–45.

[IV/200b] us that the opening of the Telescope is to be regarded as only like a point in relation to the distance.

Further, it is certain that to see a whole object we need, not only the rays from one single point, but also all the other cones of rays
 15 proceeding from all the other points. And for that reason it is also necessary that they come together in so many other foci when they pass through the lens. And although the eye itself is not so precisely constructed that all the rays coming from the different points of the object meet in exactly as many other points in the back
 20 of the eye, nevertheless, it is certain that those shapes which can produce this result are to be preferred to all others. But since a limited segment of a circle can have the effect that (mechanically speaking) it brings together all the rays proceeding from one point into another
 25 point on its diameter, it will also bring together all the others which come from the other points on the object into as many other points. For a line can be drawn from any point on the object which passes through the center of the circle, although for this purpose the opening of the Telescope must be made much smaller than it would
 30 be otherwise, if only one focus were needed, as you will easily be able to see.

What I say here about a Circle cannot be said about an Ellipse, or a Hyperbola, much less other more composite shapes, because one can only draw one line which
 35 passes through each focus from a single point on the
 [IV/201b] object. This is what I wanted to say about this matter in my first letter.

You will be able to see from the adjacent figure the demonstration that the angle which the rays coming from different
 30 points make on the surface of the eye becomes greater or less as the foci differ more or less. So after sending you a very friendly greeting, nothing remains but to say that I am, etc.



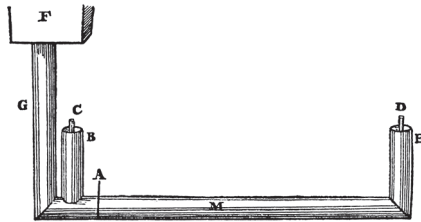
B. d. S.
 Voorburg, 25 March 1667

LETTER 41(NS)

TO THE MOST WORTHY AND WISE MR. JARIG JELLES
FROM B. D. S.

Sir,⁸⁰

[IV/202b] I shall relate briefly here what I discovered by experiment concerning the matter you asked me about, first in person, and then in a letter. To that I'll add what I now think about the subject. I had a wooden tube made for me, 10 ft. long, with a cavity 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ in. wide, to which I attached three perpendicular tubes, as shown in the figure below.



To test first whether the pressure of the water around tube B was as great as that around E, I plugged tube M around A with a small piece of wood, prepared for that purpose. Next, I made the mouth of B so narrow that it would take a little glass tube like C. Then, after I had filled the tube with water from the Container F, I observed to what height it would rise through the little tube C. Next I stopped up tube B, and removing the piece of wood at A, permitted the water to flow into tube E, which I had prepared in the same way as B. After I had filled the whole tube again with water, I discovered that it rose to the same height through D as it had through C. This persuaded me that the length of the tube is no hindrance, or a very small one.

[IV/203b] But to test this more accurately, I tried whether tube E could also fill a cubic foot container prepared for this as quickly as B could. To measure the time, because I did not have a pendulum clock available, I used a glass tube, bent back on itself, like H, the shorter part of which was immersed in the water, and the longer part of which was hanging freely in the air.

80. NS: *Myn Heer*, Sir. OP: *Humanissime Vir*, Most Worthy Sir. Given the relationship between Spinoza and Jelles, and the salutations of the preceding two letters, it seems likely that the actual salutation was the more cordial *Waarde Vrient*, which I've been translating "Dear Friend."

With these preparations, I let the water flow first through tube B in a stream as thick as the tube until the cubic foot container was full.

Then with an accurate scale I weighed how much water had flowed into the dish, L, during this time,

20 and found its weight to be four ounces. Next I stopped up tube B, and let the water flow in a stream equal to it through tube E into the cubic foot con-

[IV/204b] tainer. When this was full, as before I weighed the water which had flowed into the dish during this time, and found the weight of the former to exceed that of the latter by not even a half ounce. But since the streams both from B and from E had not flowed
30 continuously with the same force, I repeated the operation and first brought as much water as we had learned from the experience of the first trial would be necessary to have available.

There were three of us, each as busy as we could be, and we carried out the operation described more

35 accurately than before, though not as accurately as I had indeed wanted.

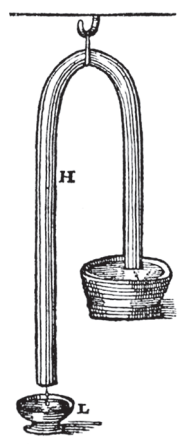
[IV/205b] Nevertheless, this gave me enough evidence to draw some conclusion
15 about this matter, since I found almost the same difference the second time as the first.

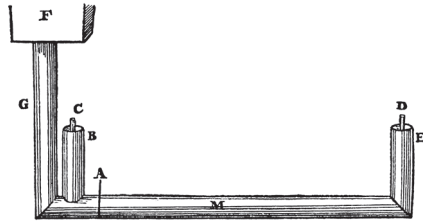
Having weighed the matter, and these experiments, carefully, I am compelled to conclude that the difference the length of the tube can make is relevant only at the beginning—that is, when the water is

20 beginning to flow—but when the water has flowed for a short time, it will flow with as much force through a very long tube as it does through a short one. The reason for this is that the pressure of the

[IV/206b] higher water always retains the same force and that all the motion the water communicates it continuously regains, through the weight. And therefore it will continuously communicate this motion to the
20 water in the tube until the latter, being pushed on, acquires as much speed as the higher water can give it gravitational force.

For it's certain that if in the first moment the water in tube G confers on the water in tube M one degree of speed, in the second moment, if it retains its earlier force, as is supposed, it will com-
25 municate four degrees of speed to the same water, and so, in turn, until the water in the longer tube, M, has received exactly as much force as the gravitational force of the higher water contained in tube G can give it.





30 So, simply from the pressure of the higher water, water running
through a tube 40,000 ft. long will, after a short time has passed, acquire
as much speed as it would have acquired if the tube, M, had been only
a foot long. If I could have acquired more precise instruments, I would
have been able to determine the time the water in the longer tube
requires to achieve such a great speed. Nevertheless, I don't think that's
35 necessary, since the main point has been determined sufficiently, etc.

B. d. S.
Voorburg, 5 September

A Critique of Theology and Politics



EDITORIAL PREFACE

FROM LETTER 29 we learned that by September 1665 Spinoza had begun writing a version of the *Theological-Political Treatise* (TTP). From Letter 30 we learned what his main objectives in this work were: to expose and refute the prejudices of the theologians, to rebut the charge that he was an atheist, and to defend the freedom to philosophize and say what we think, which he accused the preachers of trying to suppress as much as they could. We may begin by considering some of the theological prejudices to be exposed.

SUPERSTITION

Spinoza's Preface to the TTP offers an account of the causes and effects of superstition. We are all at the mercy of fortune. However carefully we try to plan our affairs, events we could not anticipate, and cannot control, may obstruct and frustrate those plans. An unexpected illness takes someone we love from us; a hurricane destroys our town; a surprise attack on one of our cities kills thousands, costs millions, and puts fear in our hearts. Recognizing the limitations of our power, and vacillating between hope and fear, we readily accept propositions we would like to believe, which seem to promise some control over our futures, even though those beliefs might not survive critical scrutiny.¹

The ancient Greeks and Romans believed they could read the future in the entrails of animals, and might overcome obstacles to their plans if they performed the right rituals. Perhaps they would get a fair wind to sail for Troy if they appeased an angry goddess by sacrificing a beloved daughter. Spinoza begins with examples of pagan superstition, whose irrationality his Christian contemporaries would readily concede. But soon he slides into a critique of his own time. "The multitude are still at the mercy of pagan superstition" (Preface, §13). The ancient pagans believed in invisible powers, personal beings who were supposed to have the ability to protect them from harm, and who might have the will to help them, if approached in the right way. The modern multitude have substituted a belief in one God for the ancient belief in many, and belief in a sacred text for belief in divination. But the logic of the

1. Readers familiar with Hobbes' *Leviathan*, or Hume's *Natural History of Religion*, might well be reminded of those texts when they read Spinoza's Preface.

beliefs is the same: it is the result, not of reason, but of the passions of hope and fear, and the desire to control the future.

ANTICLERICALISM

It's unfortunate to guide your life by irrational beliefs. But it's doubly unfortunate when those beliefs put believers in the power of men who claim special knowledge of God's will and of how to please him. They may have no scruples about using the power this gives them. They may give their blessing to the leaders of civil society, or withhold it, as suits their purposes. They may also have no scruples about trying to preserve their power by repressing criticism which might threaten its basis. In western Europe and the Americas, such clerics have often been the chief enemies of freedom of thought and expression, and a threat to progress in philosophy and science.

One of the most crucial prejudices attacked in the TTP is the idea that religion consists of mysteries we cannot grasp, but which we must accept on the authority of the leaders who propagate them, appealing to sacred texts whose interpretation they claim privileged access to. They substitute for the natural light of reason the idea of a supernatural light, revelation, as our proper guide in life.² Allied with this prejudice is a dubious principle of scriptural interpretation. Because scripture is supposed to be the word of God, some allege that it must be everywhere true and divine. So if we find in it passages which seem false or inconsistent, we must assume that we don't understand them, and seek an interpretation which makes them not only consistent, but true (§19).

THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

This is a mistake. The correct procedure, Spinoza argues, is that we must approach the text of scripture using the same philological methods we would use in trying to interpret any other ancient text. Only when we have determined its meaning in that way can we reasonably make a judgment about its truth or divinity. By "philological methods" I mean what Spinoza calls a "history" of the text. This history requires that we determine the languages in which the texts were originally written, have a thorough knowledge of those languages, and understand how the texts were composed and preserved:

2. Cf. Preface, §§16–19 and 34, with Letter 30, IV/166/20ff. (and in Volume I, Letter 23, IV/145–46). For my system of references, see Short Titles and Abbreviations.

who wrote them, when, for what audience, for what purpose; and who preserved them, what different manuscript traditions there are, whether the manuscripts have been corrupted, and who decided they were sacred (vii, 14–37). These determinations must be made, as far as possible, from internal indications in the text itself, not from tradition. Spinoza is convinced—and argues forcefully—that tradition is an unreliable source of information on such matters. That is one important implication of the slogan that we must seek our knowledge of scripture only from scripture itself.

If we follow this method, Spinoza thinks we'll conclude: *first*, that in many cases we have no idea what scripture means; even the most learned theologians don't know enough about the history of the text to understand it; *second*, that the Old Testament³ is not reliable as history, because the historical portions of that text were constructed many centuries after the events they claim to describe, by an editor trying to make sense of conflicting traditions, which have survived only in his amalgam; and *finally*, that when scripture speaks about speculative matters, such as the nature of God, it is no more reliable than it is when it talks about history. When the prophets speak about God in scripture, they often speak falsely, by the lights of more recent theology, sometimes because they're accommodating their message to the intellectual limitations of their audience, sometimes because they themselves have an inadequate conception of God. What we *can* understand, without fear of error, is the basic moral message of Scripture: we must love God and our neighbors, and do what clearly follows from its fundamental prescriptions. We must defend justice; we must aid the poor; we must kill no one; we must not covet what others have (xii, 37).

ATHEISM

If Scripture is to be valued primarily for its moral teachings, not as history, and not as providing an adequate conception of God, it's hardly surprising that Spinoza had to defend himself against the charge of

3. Spinoza's history of the Old Testament is worked out in TTP viii–x. He does not give the New Testament the kind of critical examination he gives the Old. He offers various (not entirely plausible) reasons for this restraint (in x, 48), but the most likely reasons are tact and prudence. In Curley 2015b I've tried to work out some of the points he might have made had he really felt free to say what he thought. One is his suggestion that the original language of the New Testament was probably Aramaic, not Greek, the Greek text being a translation of a lost Aramaic original. (The language Spinoza calls "Syriac" in ADN. XXVI, attached to xi, 3, is in fact a dialect of Aramaic.) For more on this, see p. 64.

atheism.⁴ “Atheist” in this period was often a general term applied, not just to those who deny the existence of God (or of any other divine beings), but to anyone who did not accept the basic propositions on which Christians and Jews agreed. In his essay on atheism, for example, Bacon called the Epicureans “the school . . . most accused of atheism,” not because they denied the existence of gods, which they didn’t, but because they denied that the gods played any causal role either in creating the world or in determining what happens in it.

Spinoza doesn’t deny the existence of God. He affirms it. But he claims that we know God’s existence best from the immutable order of nature (vi, 7–38). And he identifies God’s guidance (his activity in the world) with that order (iii, 7–8), that is, with “the universal laws of nature, according to which all things happen and are determined.” In claiming that the order of nature is immutable, Spinoza rejects the normal Jewish and Christian view of God as a personal agent, who makes choices motivated by his knowledge and goodness, and whose creatures can influence his choices through actions of their own, such as the performance of rituals, or the intercession of saints, or obedience to God’s commands, or accepting Jesus as their savior. Such views presuppose that God’s actions can change, depending on what his creatures do. Whatever means of influence believers might have thought feasible, to accept the idea that God’s activity in nature is nothing but the operation of immutable laws is to give up all hope of influencing his actions.

The distance between Spinoza’s conception of God and common Jewish and Christian conceptions of God makes it understandable that his contemporaries called him an atheist. But unlike many branded with that label, Spinoza does think there is good in both these religions: he thinks the basic moral teachings enumerated above are clearly taught in scripture, and are salutary. If we wish to be blessed, to achieve the greatest happiness humans are capable of, we must follow those teachings as best we can. We must love God and love our neighbors as ourselves (xii, 34). And we must do the things which clearly follow from these basic requirements: practice justice, aid the poor, and so on. But when scripture teaches one thing in one place and something very different in others—for example, that if someone injures us, we must inflict a similar injury on the offender (as in Exodus 21:23–25; Leviticus 24:19–20; Deuteronomy 19:21), and that if

4. Spinoza seems to have acquired this reputation as early as 1661, before he had published even his exposition of Descartes’ *Principles*. On this see the travel diary of a young Danish scientist, Olaus Borch, reported in Klever 1989.

someone injures us, we must not retaliate, but turn the other cheek (as in Matthew 5:38–41)—we must use our discretion, and consider what differences in historical circumstances might explain the conflicting prescriptions (vii, 29–33).

Spinoza has a conception of God very different from the one readers are likely to arrive at by reading the scriptures. He believes, as Jews and Christians generally do, that there is a God who is the immutable first cause of the universe, whose existence explains everything in the universe, but does not itself require explanation. But he not only rejects the anthropomorphisms common in Scripture—its tendency to speak of God as having a body, or a spatial location subject to change, or emotions we regard as defects in humans, like jealousy and anger—he also rejects its tendency to speak of God as having emotions we generally approve, like a love for his creatures, and its tendency to speak of God as not knowing things you might think the creator of the universe would have to know (ii, 24–48). In addition, he denies that God performs miracles. Or at least, he denies that miracles occur in the sense the term “miracle” would normally have.⁵ I believe it is wrong to classify Spinoza as an atheist, if that term is taken to imply the rejection of all belief in God and all religion generally. But to regard him as a kind of theist is to stretch the boundaries of theism. There is no easy way to label his religious position.⁶

THE EXCOMMUNICATION

Some nine years before he began writing the TTP, as a young man of twenty-three, Spinoza was excommunicated by the synagogue in which he had grown up. This was not a trivial matter. For one thing, it meant

5. Spinoza allows that miracles occur if “miracle” just means an event which the person reporting the miracle cannot explain by known laws of nature. He denies that miracles occur, if “miracle” means an event contrary to the laws of nature. Cf. the Glossary on miracle. The later correspondence with Oldenburg shows how hard it could be, even for a fairly liberal Christian, to accept that miracles occur only in the sense Spinoza allows. See Letters 71, 73–75, 77, and 78.

6. Some like the label “pantheist,” often used, by those who advocate it, without any clear explanation of its meaning. One common, but ambiguous, formula is that pantheism involves an identification of God with nature. The attribution of this view to Spinoza is usually supported by pointing his use of the phrase *Deus sive Natura* (God or Nature) in the Preface to Part IV of the *Ethics*, and by statements like: “I do not separate God from nature, as everyone known to me has done.” (Letter 6, IV/36/24. Cf. Letter 73, IV/307) But if identifying God with nature means identifying God with the universe, understood as the totality of things, that’s a view Spinoza seems to reject, rather heatedly, in his reply to Van Velthuysen, Letter 43 (IV/223b/22–25). For more on this, see the Glossary, under ATHEISM.

that he was excluded from the Jewish community in which he had been brought up, including members of his own family, and had to give up the role in the family business he had assumed when his father died. For a long time the reasons for his excommunication were rather mysterious. The surviving documents were frustratingly vague about them. But after World War II, a French scholar, I. S. Revah, discovered new documents in the files of the Inquisition, showing that there were three principal grounds: (i) Spinoza held that God only exists philosophically; (ii) he believed that the soul dies with the body; and (iii) he believed that the law of Moses is not true.⁷

Perhaps Spinoza could have held most of the views for which he was excommunicated without being expelled from the synagogue. Maimonides himself had rejected many of the anthropomorphisms Spinoza complains of, and defended a very abstract, philosophical conception of God.⁸ The immortality of the soul has long been controversial in Judaism, since the support for it in the Hebrew Bible is at best ambiguous.⁹ Conceivably the synagogue might have tolerated Spinoza's denial of miracles.¹⁰ But Spinoza also attacks something much more central to the Jewish tradition: the idea of God as a lawgiver, who prescribes to his human creatures how they ought to behave. He argues that if you define God as the philosophical traditions of Judaism and Christianity commonly do, as a being possessing all perfections, including omnipotence, the proposition that God has given laws to his people—given them commands they have the power either to obey or to disobey—involves a contradiction.¹¹ It cannot be true. This probably would have been too much for even the most liberal seventeenth-century congregation to allow.

7. See Revah 1959. Revah's explanation was based on the accounts of two Spanish visitors to the Netherlands who reported back to the Inquisition about religious dissent in the former Spanish colony. Some commentators have been skeptical of Revah's findings. For example: Van Bunge 1997. I've defended it in Curley 2015a, arguing that the congruence between the reports to the Inquisition and the teachings of the TTP confirms the accuracy of the Spanish visitors' reports.

8. In Part I of his *Guide*, Maimonides held that (with some exceptions) the only true predications we can make of God are negative ones: God is not this, he is not that. The exceptions he allowed were predications of certain actions of God: that he did this or that he did that (*Guide* I, 52).

9. On this see Raphael 1994 or Nadler 2001.

10. There is precedent in the Jewish tradition for philosophers questioning the occurrence of miracles. Maimonides is not as unequivocal on the matter as Spinoza is, but he is clearly reluctant to interpret the biblical accounts of miracles as events truly contrary to the regular operations of nature. See his *Guide* II, 29; his "Essay on Resurrection" (in *Crisis*, 223–24); and Fox 1990, *passim*.

11. See iv, 23–37, and my analysis of this argument in Curley 1996. The argument assumes that law, in the relevant sense, is a command which the person commanded has the power to disobey, that a command is an expression of the will of the one who issues it, and that no one has the power to thwart the will of an omnipotent being.

FREEDOM

People who have suffered from religious persecution are not always advocates of freedom of thought and expression for others. The Protestants Queen Mary persecuted in sixteenth-century England turned persecutors themselves, once they gained power. The Calvinists who persecuted Catholics in seventeenth-century Holland were descended from victims of Catholic persecutions a century earlier, when Philip II of Spain ruled their land. The leaders of the synagogue who expelled Spinoza were descended from Iberian emigrés in the sixteenth century, who sought in the Netherlands the freedom to practice openly the Judaism they could not practice in Iberia. But for Spinoza defending freedom of thought and expression for all religions was central to his writing on politics and religion.¹²

Spinoza's theological argument for freedom tries to show that the true religion does not require having the right beliefs, but only doing the right thing. Here doing the right thing means acting according to the most basic moral teachings of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. The true religion has no specific credal requirements, and is compatible with many different beliefs about God—Jewish, Christian, Muslim ... even the philosopher's belief in an impersonal God—so long as the moral requirements are honored.¹³ If this perspective were accepted, it would remove the principal rationales for religious persecution. Coercing belief could no longer be justified as a way of saving the soul of the person coerced, since salvation requires none of the traditional beliefs. Repressing the expression of heterodox beliefs could no longer be justified as a way of protecting the faithful from corrupting influences which would endanger their salvation.¹⁴ There is also a political argument for freedom of thought and expression, which we will discuss later.

12. This is not to say that Spinoza does not set some limits to freedom of expression. See the discussion of seditious opinions in *xx*, 20–23.

13. The doctrines of the universal faith Spinoza advocates in *xiv*, 24–34, are explicitly left open to a broad interpretation of the kind even a Spinozistic philosopher would be able to accept. In the end, though faith is supposed to be necessary to salvation, it does not matter what that faith is, so long as it leads to actions which conform to the fundamental moral requirements. That Spinoza was a pluralist in religion, in the sense that he believed many different religions offer ways to salvation, emerges clearly in his correspondence with Albert Burgh (see Letter 76), as I've argued in Curley 2010.

14. The former rationale was developed by Augustine, in his correspondence regarding the Donatist controversy (see particularly Letters 93 and 185). The latter by Aquinas, in *ST*, II-II, qu. 10, art. 1, art. 3.

THE LOST DEFENSE

So far I have tried to give some notion of how Spinoza went about pursuing the ends he mentioned to Oldenburg in Letter 30. Those were not the only ends he had. Credible reports from the seventeenth century tell us that on the occasion of his excommunication Spinoza wrote (in Spanish) a defense of his departure from the synagogue.¹⁵ This defense seems not to have survived. But the same reports which tell us of its existence tell us also that some of its themes resurfaced in the TTP. So the TTP may give us some idea of its probable contents, and some ideas in the TTP may go back that early.

It's hard to believe that Spinoza would not, in that defense, have replied to the principal charges which provided the basis for the excommunication, the charges mentioned in the reports to the Inquisition discussed above. So passages in the TTP relevant to those charges may well have originated in the lost defense. For example, one of the charges against him is said to have been that he held that God only exists philosophically—that is, as I would understand it, that God exists only in the sense that there is a first cause¹⁶ of the universe, whose actions are part of the explanation of everything that happens in the universe, but who does not have the personal characteristics the scriptures might lead you to expect him to have, and in particular, does not have the characteristic of being a lawgiver. Here the TTP helps us to understand in what sense Spinoza held the views for which he was excommunicated.

But there are other doctrines in the TTP, not discussed above, which also seem plausible candidates for having featured in that lost work: notably, Spinoza's criticism of the doctrine that the Jews were God's chosen people (in Ch. 3), his rejection of ceremonies (in Ch. 5), and his rejection of faith in historical narratives (also in Ch. 5). This is not to say that those chapters have been carried over from an earlier work without significant alteration. The intervening years may well

15. As with the Spanish visitors' reports to the Inquisition (discussed above, p. 50), not everyone finds the reports of a lost defense credible. The editors of the translation in ALM are skeptics. But this may be because some defenders of the early reports made excessive claims for them, e.g., that the central theological chapters in the TTP came from the defense Spinoza wrote in 1656. See ALM, 6–7. I would argue only that Spinoza reused some material from his earlier work, but not that any of the recycled material corresponded to a chapter in the TTP. I would also suppose that Spinoza made some (possibly significant) changes in the material he did reuse. For an argument in favor of a general acceptance of the reports, see Curley 2015a. Though I disagree with ALM about this particular issue, I recommend their introduction to the TTP for its valuable suggestions about the evolution of this work.

16. "First" in the order of explanation, not first in time, since Spinoza believes that the universe is eternal.

have given him the opportunity to deepen (and perhaps moderate) his presentation of the themes he reprised.

The TTP is a complex work, with multiple agendas, *one* of which was probably to make the case for rejecting Judaism, *as it was understood in the synagogue from which he was expelled*. This is not to say that Spinoza rejected Judaism in its entirety. He thinks there is a core ethical teaching in Judaism (which it shares with Christianity and other religions) which is both true and salutary. He does not reject Judaism when its teachings are construed as being limited to that common core.

A CAUTION

There is a major interpretive issue which faces readers of the TTP, an issue we need to address before we go any further. To what extent can we take Spinoza to be speaking candidly in this work? Scholars are divided about this. In *Persecution and the Art of Writing* (Strauss 1988) Leo Strauss argued that Spinoza was writing at a time when he ran the risk of persecution if he ventured too far from orthodoxy; so he had to deploy the art of “writing between the lines,” that is, writing in such a way that readers would have to read between the lines to fully understand what he was saying. The reader might find Spinoza saying things apparently quite orthodox, which he nevertheless doesn’t believe, but expects his most astute readers to recognize that he doesn’t believe. Indeed, he expects those readers to realize that the orthodox things he says are false.

Many contemporary Spinoza scholars—probably most of them—reject Strauss’s position. They find his arguments weak and think that encouraging people to read between the lines of Spinoza’s works gives them too much license to attribute to Spinoza doctrines he did not hold. I have a good deal of sympathy with that reaction. I think Strauss often argued badly for his views, and made oracular pronouncements which a more self-critical author would not have made. But I do think he was right about the fundamental point he was trying to make.¹⁷ Spinoza can be, and was perceived by his more orthodox contemporaries as being, remarkably outspoken in his criticism of orthodox theology.¹⁸ Some found him intolerably outspoken and wanted his books banned. But Spinoza’s willingness to go as far as he did should not lull us into thinking that he did not sometimes have to make nice judgments about just how far

17. I’ve articulated my position regarding Leo Strauss more fully in Curley 2015b. Like most of my articles on the TTP, this piece is available on my website: <https://sites.google.com/a/umich.edu/emcurley/>.

18. See Curley 1990a for a discussion of some contemporary reactions.

it was safe to go.¹⁹ Not only does Spinoza not always write what he thinks, he also does not always think what he writes.²⁰ Sometimes he tries to raise questions without being provably culpable of having done so. Here's an important illustration of this.

The correspondence provides conclusive evidence that sometimes Spinoza "pulls his punches," that is, expresses his criticism of orthodox views in ways which do not go as far as he would be prepared to go in a less public forum. In TTP i, he writes of Jesus—whom he *always* calls "Christ"—that

God's Wisdom, that is, a Wisdom surpassing human wisdom, assumed a human nature in Christ, and that Christ was the way to salvation. (III/21/10–12, i, 23)

That's quite a remarkable statement, apt to encourage his readers to think that after his departure from Judaism Spinoza became a Christian. Some readers have apparently thought that. But then Spinoza cautions us not to regard this statement as saying more than it does:

I must warn here that I'm not speaking in any way about the things some of the Churches maintain about Christ. Not that I deny them. For I readily confess that I don't grasp them. (i, 24)

That's less than candid. Oldenburg—perhaps not the most astute reader of Spinoza, but no fool—saw that there might be more going on here than meets the eye. Reporting about reactions to the TTP in England, he wrote Spinoza that some of his British readers

say you conceal your opinion concerning Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the World and only Mediator for men, as well as your opinion concerning his Incarnation and Atonement. They ask that you reveal clearly your thinking about these three points. (Letter 71, IV/304/15–18)

Evidently it did not take Leo Strauss to teach us that a heterodox author might find it necessary to be diplomatic about how he phrased his heterodoxies. Spinoza replied:

to reveal my thinking more clearly regarding [that] point ... I say that it is completely unnecessary for salvation to know Christ according to the flesh. We must think quite differently about that eternal son of God, i.e., God's eternal wisdom, which has manifested itself in all things, but most in the human mind, and most of all in Christ Jesus. No one can attain blessedness without this [i.e., God's eternal wisdom], as that which alone

19. ADN. XXI is quite explicit about this.

20. *Pace* Lagrée 2004, 10, or Matheron 1971, 149, or Nadler 2011, 247n6.

EDITORIAL PREFACE

teaches what is true and false, good and evil. And because, as I said, this wisdom was manifested most through Jesus Christ, his disciples preached the same thing, insofar as he revealed it to them, and they showed that they could pride themselves beyond other people in that spirit of Christ. (Letter 73, IV/308a/9–309a/2)

So far, I take it, Spinoza is saying nothing which a careful reader of the TTP could not get from that work. As I would understand this passage: it is not essential for salvation to believe the gospel narratives about Jesus (including the doctrine of the resurrection, which later correspondence shows that Spinoza is particularly skeptical about). What *is* essential for salvation is to adhere to the fundamental moral teachings of Jesus, that is, the teachings enumerated above (p. 47). But then Spinoza goes beyond anything he had said in the TTP:

As for what certain Churches add to this—that God assumed a human nature—I warned expressly that I don’t know what they mean. Indeed, to confess the truth, they seem to me to speak no less absurdly than if someone were to say to me that a circle has assumed the nature of a square. (Letter 73, IV/309a/2–309a/6)

This is quite explicit about what church teachings he had in mind when he said what he did in i, 24. It’s the doctrine of the incarnation which is at issue. But more crucially, Spinoza now goes beyond the TTP, saying, not just that he doesn’t understand that doctrine, but that he thinks it’s self-contradictory. At a minimum Spinoza was pulling his punches in the TTP: not saying the most provocative thing he thought. But wasn’t he doing more than that? After all, in i, 24, he said that he *didn’t deny* the church doctrines he professed merely not to understand. But in the letter to Oldenburg he says he thinks they’re absurd. That is, in the correspondence he *does deny* what he had said in the TTP he did not deny.

Again, in the Preface to the TTP Spinoza says he has the rare good fortune to “live in a republic in which everyone is granted complete freedom of judgment, and is permitted to worship God according to his mentality, and in which nothing is thought to be dearer or sweeter than freedom” (Preface, §12). Now anyone who knows anything about the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century knows that it was a remarkably free place, as European countries went in those days. But it did *not* grant its citizens complete freedom of thought and expression, or complete freedom of worship. Catholic worship was illegal (though this law was not rigorously enforced).²¹

21. Price 1994 is particularly helpful on this subject.

Spinoza showed that he did not think he had complete freedom to say what he thought when he published the TTP anonymously, with false information on the title page about the publisher and place of publication. He showed it by his evasiveness about the relation of Jesus to God. He showed it again when he wrote to Oldenburg in Letter 30 that one reason for writing the TTP was to counter the preachers' excessive authority and aggressiveness. So when he says that he has the good fortune to live in a country which grants him complete freedom of thought, he's not just pulling his punches. He's saying something *not true*, something *he knows is not true*, and something he must have realized that *well-informed readers of his work would know was not true*. The informed reader has been reminded: the work you are about to read was not written under conditions of perfect freedom; draw whatever inferences seem reasonable about the degree of candor you can expect.

SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

The political theory of the TTP belongs to a family of theories generally called "social contract theories," whose best-known proponents are Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. The basic idea of such theories, which go back a long way, is that political institutions can be explained—and in suitable cases, justified—by appeal to an agreement a group of people make among themselves to set up a government which will make and enforce rules for their cooperation.

In *Leviathan* Hobbes provided a paradigm of such theories, arguing that, human nature being what it is, when people live without an effective government, there will be enough actual conflict, or reasonable fear of conflict, that no one, no matter what his innate physical and mental endowments, will have enough security in the possession of any good to make life tolerable. He called the condition in which people live without any effective government "the state of nature," and argued, with pardonable hyperbole, that in this condition "the life of man [is] solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short."²²

22. See *Leviathan* xiii, 9. Sometimes Hobbes calls this state "the natural condition of mankind"; sometimes the "state of nature." In any case, it is important to understand that he is not necessarily referring to a primitive stage in the history of mankind, before the institution of governments, but to any condition where men live without a government possessing effective power to make and enforce laws, such as might occur if government entirely breaks down. Cf. *Leviathan* xiii, 11.

Here I assume an interpretation of Hobbes defended in my introduction to the Hackett edition of *Leviathan*. I call the statement quoted hyperbolic, because I don't think Hobbes really believed that the state of nature would literally be "a war of every man

People create governments, on this theory, to provide themselves with the security they lack in the state of nature, and in general, to make it possible for them to enjoy the benefits of cooperation. Hobbes is eloquent about the economic benefits of cooperation. Without it there would be

no culture of the earth, no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea, no commodious building, no instruments of moving and removing such things as require much force, no knowledge of the face of the earth, no account of time, no arts, no letters, no society. (*Leviathan* xiii, 9)

But this description also suggests benefits which are not purely economic.

Spinoza would broadly agree with this. He sees the creation of a social order as having many of the purposes Hobbes mentioned. But there are themes in his thought we don't find in Hobbes. For him the fact that civil society makes possible the cultivation of the arts and sciences means that it gives us a way, the only possible way, really, to achieving our highest good, the perfection of our nature, the knowledge and love of God.²³ If this should sound impossibly exalted, remember that Spinoza thinks we increase our knowledge of God by increasing our knowledge of natural things, that is, by increasing our understanding of the fundamental laws of the universe.

Another central theme in Spinoza's political thought is the idea that in a well-designed civil society people live according to reason. Spinoza does not think most people are naturally inclined to do the right thing for the right reason (iv, 6). So a well-designed society will give its citizens extrinsic incentives—promises of reward and threats of punishment—to get them to do what it would be in their interest to do even without those rewards and punishments. In the best case, this will not be a matter of rulers manipulating the people they rule. The best case is a democratic society, in which

the whole society [holds] sovereignty as a body . . . so that everyone is bound to be subject to himself, and no one is bound to be subservient to his equal. . . . obedience has no place in a social order where sovereignty is in the hands of everyone and laws are enacted by common consent . . . whether the laws in such a social order are increased or diminished, the

against every man." I think he did believe that the state of nature would be something approaching that condition, which my paraphrase attempts to capture.

23. TTP iv, 9–12. Hobbes had denied that there is such a thing as our highest good. Cf. *Leviathan* xi, 1.

people nevertheless remains equally free, because it does not act from the authority of someone else, but by its own consent. (v, 23, 25)

The mechanism for creating such a society is an agreement by which each member of society transfers all his power to “a general assembly of men which has, as a body, the supreme right over everything in its power” (xvi, 24–26).

Formally, the power of this assembly is absolute. That is to say: Spinoza thinks, as Hobbes did, that any political order requires an ultimate decision maker, whose power is not checked by any institutional means. As far as the requirements of the theory are concerned, this decision maker could be a single individual, or an assembly made up of a small subset of the population, or the whole population. In the TTP Spinoza does not attempt to argue at length that an assembly of the whole citizenry is preferable to rule by one or a few.²⁴ (That is a task he will undertake in the *Political Treatise*.) What is supposed to provide the citizens of any government with protection against tyranny is that every government, no matter what its form, has *de facto* limits on its power. This is easiest to see in the case of a monarchy, where the person who may in theory have absolute power must nonetheless depend on the voluntary cooperation of others to know what situations in his kingdom need remedy and to enforce obedience to his demands. (See the TP vi, 5 on this point.) And there are certain things no king can effectively command his subjects to do, no matter how absolute his power may be in theory. Human nature being what it is, the sovereign cannot command his subjects to love those who have harmed them, or not to be offended by insults, or not to desire to be free of fear (xvii, 2). The sovereign who tries to exceed the *de facto* limits on his power may quickly find himself deprived of his *de jure* power (xvii, 3).

This emphasis on *de facto* power finds an important application in the political argument for freedom of thought and expression which Spinoza mounts in the last two chapters of the TTP. Formally, Spinoza, like Hobbes, is an Erastian, who thinks the church should be completely subordinate to the state (TTP xix). He assumes that there will be an official state church (as there was both in England and in the Dutch Republic). And he insists that only the state has the right to make laws binding on its citizens, that it has the right to determine

24. Though he does say in TTP v, 23, that if one man alone has the sovereignty, he needs to have some quality which surpasses ordinary human nature. If he doesn't, then he must at least try to persuade the people that he does. Presumably the same would hold of a group of patricians who had the sovereignty collectively. And in xvi, 36, he argues that a democratic state is the most natural state, because it approaches most nearly the freedom and equality of the state of nature.

what is taught in the churches it sponsors, to resolve disputes within the church about the interpretation of its doctrines, to appoint ministers, and to excommunicate members who fail to observe the church's rules. Spinoza's defense of freedom of thought and expression, unlike most modern defenses, does not involve maintaining that church and state must be separate.

What it does involve is the claim that rulers act contrary both to the interests of the state and to their own interests when they try to impose too much uniformity of belief. Spinoza is not naive about the powers of the state. He knows, from the Jewish experience in Iberia, that it is possible for the state to use its coercive powers to secure genuine belief, not merely external conformity:

When the King of Spain compelled the Jews either to accept the religion of the kingdom or to go into exile, a great many Jews accepted the religion of the priests. (iii, 54; cf. xx, 4)

No doubt many of the Jews who gave in to this coercion merely pretended to be converted. But Spinoza does not indulge in the comforting illusion that coercion is always ineffective. Many of the Jews who converted under pressure became sincere enough Catholics. (Perhaps they were not very good Jews to begin with.) What Spinoza insists on is that the social costs of attempting to impose more than a very general civil religion—of the kind advocated in xiv, 22–34—are very high. People resent being told what to believe. And the people who resent it most are precisely those people who make the most useful citizens: those who rank high in intelligence and integrity. Rulers who attempt to pressure their subjects into publicly espousing propositions they don't believe risk generating fierce opposition and weakening their own power. The quest for conformity is necessarily violent, and requires a centralization of authority antithetical to the best form of government, democracy.

TEXTUAL ISSUES²⁵

When the TTP was published, its title page bore the date 1670, though the work may have appeared late in 1669. There were several subsequent editions in Spinoza's lifetime, but apparently he was not much involved in these editions. Though they sometimes correct typographical errors, they do not have great importance for the establishment of the text.

25. In this section I summarize the information given in ALM, 15–16, 19–37.

The most interesting questions about the text concern the notes Spinoza began adding in the last months of his life. In a letter to Van Velthuysen in the autumn of 1675, he mentioned a plan to clarify some of the more obscure passages in the TTP with notes. By July 1676 he seems to have begun that process, although he had not carried it very far. All told, we have thirty-nine notes, from various sources, with varying claims to authenticity. If we discount sources which merely duplicate other earlier sources, there are five sources for these notes:

Klefmann: five notes, written in Spinoza's hand, in a copy of the TTP he gave to his friend Jacob Klefmann in July 1676;

Marchand: thirty-six notes in a manuscript of Prosper Marchand (1675–1756), who made a copy of the notes a Mr. Frisch had asked him to inscribe in a copy of the TTP he had (c. 1711);

Von Murr: thirty-three notes which first appeared in 1802 in an edition of the TTP by Christoph Gottlieb von Murr (1733–1811);

Saint-Glain: thirty-one notes in the French translation of the TTP published in 1678 by Gabriel de Saint-Glain (c. 1620–1684);

KB: thirty-four notes in a Dutch translation of the notes preserved in a manuscript in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague.

The notes in Klefmann's copy are clearly the ones we can be most confident about. Not only are they all in Spinoza's hand, but each of them occurs in all our other sources. It seems that at that stage Spinoza had not gotten very far in the process of adding notes. So notes which appear in later sources, but not in Klefmann, are presumably later additions to the text. The notes in Klefmann's copy are only five of the thirty-nine. The provenance of the others is unclear, though most occur in at least four of our five sources, as will be seen from the following tabulation:

ADN I: Marchand, Von Murr, KB [III/15/10]

ADN II: Klefmann, Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/16/7]

ADN III: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/27/20]

ADN IV: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/48/8]

ADN V: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/48/20]

ADN VI: Klefmann, Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/84/24]

ADN VII: Klefmann, Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/107/1]

ADN VIII: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/111/12]

EDITORIAL PREFACE

ADN IX: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/120/1]
ADN X: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/122/5]
ADN XI: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/129/26]
ADN XII: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/129/32]
ADN XIII: Klefmann, Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/130/14]
ADN XIV: Klefmann, Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/131/9]
ADN XV: Saint-Glain, KB [III/131/28]
ADN XVI: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/132/12]
ADN XVII: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/132/28]
ADN XVIII: Marchand, Von Murr, KB [III/135/8]
ADN XIX: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/136/7]
ADN XX: Saint-Glain [III/136/12]
ADN XXI: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/141/19]
ADN XXII: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/143/33]
ADN XXIII: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/145/25]
ADN XXIV: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/146/17]
ADN XXV: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/150/2]
ADN XXVI: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/151/29]
ADN XXVII: Saint-Glain [III/156/9]
ADN XXVIII: Marchand [III/181/12]
ADN XXIX: Marchand [III/184/1]
ADN XXX: Marchand [III/188/20]
ADN XXXI: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/188/23]
ADN XXXII: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/192/8]
ADN XXXIII: Marchand, Von Murr, KB [III/195/4]
ADN XXXIV: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/198/13]
ADN XXXV: Marchand, Von Murr, KB [III/201/27]
ADN XXXVI: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/207/14]
ADN XXXVII: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/208/6]
ADN XXXVIII: Marchand, Von Murr, Saint-Glain, KB [III/210/25]
ADN XXXIX: Marchand, Von Murr, KB [III/238/26]

Most editions of the TTP place these adnotations at the end of the text. But it seems to me best to attach them to the text they annotate (as Pina Totaro did in her edition of the TTP). The tabulation above will enable readers to go from the number of the note to its location in the text, and in addition, to see what sources it comes from.

Unsurprisingly, the sources do not always give the same versions of the notes they have in common. The variations in the notes due to Saint-Glain are particularly suspect. We know from his translation of the TTP that he is prone to translate very freely, sometimes producing what is more a paraphrase than a translation, and sometimes adding material not in the text he is translating. Adnotation XX, which occurs only in Saint-Glain, is particularly problematic.²⁶

On the other hand, ALM's judgment is that, if we discount Saint-Glain's characteristic liberties of translation, his version is probably closer to Spinoza's original than the Latin texts of Marchand and Von Murr, which are apparently based on copies (or copies of copies). These seem sometimes to have mistakes not present in the copy Saint-Glain was working from. ALM make the same judgment of the KB translation.

Marchand claims that he has taken his notes directly from notes written in the margins of Spinoza's own copy, in Spinoza's own hand. Apparently this is not true. Sometimes he incorporates material from Saint-Glain, reproducing it in French, as if to confess that he doesn't have it from a Latin source. And Adnotations XXVIII–XXX, which occur only in Marchand, seem most unlikely to stem from Spinoza. (For argument on this, see ALM, 32–33. Preus 1995 treats these notes as being Marchand's own, and I think he is probably right about that. As my annotation of Chapter 15 should make clear, Spinoza attributes to Alfakhar various positions which he did not hold, but which were held by seventeenth-century Calvinist theologians. The three adnotations Preus ascribes to Marchand call attention to passages in Meyer 1666 in which Meyer is responding to those Calvinists.) Also suspect is the Syriac text in Adnotation XXVI. The Syriac Bible of Tremellius which Spinoza used was written in Hebrew characters. We don't know that Spinoza could read (or had access to) the Syriac script. So that text may come from someone else.

The comparison of Marchand's and Von Murr's versions of the text suggests that neither of them made their copies from Spinoza's own copy, but that they both derive from the same copy, which had some

26. ALM comment that "*l'Adnotatio* 20 nous étonne quelque peu par la véhémence avec laquelle une simple correction du texte biblique—une correction évidente, qui est adoptée par toutes les traductions modernes—est attaqué" (ALM, 31).

errors in it. And between Spinoza's copy and Marchand's, there was probably another intervening copy which was not part of the sequence leading to Von Murr's.

In reproducing the adnotations I mark them with two asterisks (plus "ADN." followed by the number of the note in Roman numerals). If there is bracketed material in the note, that is my addition. Notes marked with only a single asterisk appeared in the first edition, published in 1670. Where a note stems from that first edition of the TTP, I use a second asterisk, at the end of Spinoza's note, to mark it off from any additions I have made. So, for example, in the Preface to the TTP, §5, Spinoza quotes from Quintus Curtius's *History of Alexander the Great*, and has a note which reads: "As Curtius himself says, Bk. VII, §7." That portion of the note is enclosed in asterisks. The remainder of the note is my editorial comment on Spinoza's note.

My editorial comments sometimes refer to a seventeenth-century Dutch translation of the TTP, *De Rechtzinnige Theologant, of Godgeleerde Staatskundige Verhandeling* (*The Orthodox Theologian, or Theological-Political Treatise*), published in 1693 (with a title page bearing the usual false information about the publisher and place of publication). Apparently Glazemaker did this translation in the early 1670s, but suppressed it in response to a request from Spinoza, who did not want a Dutch translation of his work to appear, for fear that it would be banned if it became available in the vernacular language (see Letter 44). Spinoza's efforts to prevent a ban were of no avail. The Latin version was banned anyway. (For details, see Israel 1996.) Anyone who thinks that Spinoza stood in no danger of persecution for this work needs to remember that in its day the TTP was a banned book.

Finally, when Spinoza quotes the Hebrew Bible, he typically gives the Hebrew text first, and then his own translation into Latin. He does not rely on any existing Latin translation. Although it hasn't been customary to reproduce the Hebrew quotations in the English translations,²⁷ I believe it's desirable to do so. First, it illustrates Spinoza's commitment to an important principle of his theory of interpretation: that the interpreter must be able to deal with the original language in which the text was written, and not rely on translations. It also demonstrates Spinoza's knowledge of oriental languages, which deeply impressed some of his contemporaries. In a letter to Graevius in May 1671, Leibniz wrote that he had read Spinoza's book, and went on to say:

27. An exception is Martin Yaffe's translation of the TTP, published by Focus Philosophical Library in 2004.

I grieve that a man of his evident learning should have fallen so far into error. Hobbes' *Leviathan* has laid the foundations of the critique he carries out against the sacred books, but that critique can be shown to often be defective. These things tend to overturn the Christian Religion, which has been established by the precious blood of the martyrs and by such great labors and vigilance. If only someone could be stirred to activity who was equal to Spinoza in erudition, but [dedicated?] to the Christian cause, who might refute his frequent paralogisms and abuse of oriental letters.²⁸

Though he praised Spinoza's erudition, Leibniz nonetheless complained that Spinoza had misused his knowledge of Hebrew and related languages. This, he thought, placed a special burden on those who would refute Spinoza. That may be one reason why he did not undertake a refutation himself.

Recognizing the consistent presence of the Hebrew text in Spinoza's quotations from the Old Testament also throws into relief a notable absence. When he is quoting the New Testament, he does *not* quote the Greek text generally assumed to be original, but simply uses one of the existing Latin translations, sometimes Theodore Beza's, done from the Greek text, but quite frequently Immanuel Tremellius's, done from an Aramaic version of the text. He does not explain why he does this in any edition of the TTP published in his lifetime. But in Adnotation XXVI, he expresses a doubt that Greek was the original language of the New Testament, pointing out that the native language of the apostles was "Syriac," i.e., Aramaic. About this he is partly right and partly wrong. He is undoubtedly wrong to think that the passage about which he raises this issue was not written in Greek. (The text in question is from Paul's letter to the Romans.) But he would most probably be right to suggest that the gospel reports of the sayings of Jesus go back to an Aramaic source. There has been much debate about the language Jesus used in preaching to his Palestinian contemporaries. But the best view seems to be that it was Aramaic. (On this see Meier 1991, 255–68.) This would mean that when the Greek New Testament reports what Jesus is supposed to have said, it gives us a translation of words whose original "text" has not been preserved, making it very difficult to tell how accurate the translation is. On Spinoza's theory of scriptural interpretation, that uncomfortable fact increases the already considerable difficulties we face in knowing what Jesus actually said.

28. Leibniz, Akademie edition, I, i, 148. The bracketed phrase is a conjecture about a word illegible in the manuscript.

Theological-Political Treatise

*SEVERAL DISCUSSIONS
SHOWING THAT THE REPUBLIC CAN GRANT
FREEDOM OF PHILOSOPHIZING
WITHOUT HARMING ITS PEACE OR PIETY,
AND CANNOT DENY IT
WITHOUT DESTROYING ITS PEACE AND PIETY*

By this we know that we remain in God and that God
remains in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

1 John 4:13¹

Hamburg
Henry Künraht²
1670

Preface

[1] If men could manage all their affairs by a definite plan, or if fortune were always favorable to them, no one would be in the grip of superstition. But often they are in such a tight spot that they cannot decide
5 on any plan. Then they usually vacillate wretchedly between hope and fear, desiring immoderately the uncertain goods of fortune, and ready

1. Spinoza will cite this passage again in xiii, 22; xiv, 17; and Letter 76. The preceding verse reads: “No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us.” He will call attention to this context in xiii, 11. See also the discussion of “the spirit of God” in i, 25–40. Spinoza normally quotes the New Testament from the translation by Immanuel Tremellius (c. 1510–1580), an Italian Jewish convert to Christianity who translated the Bible into Latin from Hebrew and Syriac. In the sixteenth century some New Testament scholars believed that the Syriac version of the New Testament was older than the Greek texts on which Jerome had based his translation. See Austin 2007, 126–29. Spinoza thinks the Syriac text may be the original and not a translation. See ADN. XXVI at xi, 3, and Gebhardt V, 1.

2. Both the publisher and the place of publication are fictitious. In fact, the TTP was published in Amsterdam by Jan Rieuwertsz.

to believe anything whatever. While the mind is in doubt, it's easily driven this way or that³—and all the more easily when, shaken by hope and fear, it comes to a standstill. At other times, it's over-confident, boastful and presumptuous.

10 [2] Everyone, I think, knows this, though most people, I believe, do not know themselves. For no one who has lived among men has failed to see that when they are prospering, even if they are quite inexperienced, they are generally so full of their own wisdom that they think themselves wronged if anyone wants to give them advice—whereas in
15 adversity they don't know where to turn,⁴ and beg advice from every one. They hear no advice so foolish, so absurd or groundless, that they do not follow it. Now they hope for better things; now they fear worse, all for the slightest reasons. [3] If, while fear makes them turn this way and that, they see something happen which reminds them of some past good or evil, they think it portends either a fortunate or an
20 unfortunate outcome; they call it a favorable or unfavorable omen, even though it may deceive them a hundred times. Again, if, in amazement, they witness something strange, they believe it to be a portent which indicates the anger of the gods or of the supreme divinity. Subject to superstition and contrary to religion, they consider it a sacrilege not to avert the disaster by sacrifices and prayers.⁵ In this way they invent
countless things and interpret nature in amazing ways, as if the whole of nature were as crazy as they are.

25 [4] Because this is so, we see that the men most thoroughly enslaved to every kind of superstition are those who immoderately desire uncertain things, and that they all invoke divine aid with prayers and unmanly tears, especially when they are in danger and cannot help themselves. Because reason cannot show a certain way to the hollow
30 things they desire, they call it blind, and human wisdom vain. The delusions of the imagination, on the other hand, dreams and childish follies, they believe to be divine answers. Indeed, they believe God rejects the wise, and writes his decrees, not in the mind, but in the

3. Leopold 1902 noted many allusions in Spinoza's writings to the plays of Terence, which Van den Enden used as a means of teaching his students Latin (Meinsma 1983, ch. 5). Here the allusion is to *Andria* 266. For an analysis of the rhetorical structure of the Preface, see Akkerman 1985.

4. Here the allusion is to Terence's *Heautontimorumenos* 946. The theme recurs in the *Ethics*: III P17S, III P50S, and Def. Aff. 1Exp. (ALM).

5. Spinoza's language recalls Tacitus' description of the Jews' response to prodigies before the Roman siege of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. (*Histories* V, xiii). Tacitus criticizes the Jews for *not* performing appropriate religious rituals, because of a superstitious belief that it would be impious to do so (ALM). Jer. 10:2 instructs the Jews not to follow the heathen in being dismayed at signs in the heavens.

entrails of animals; they think fools, madmen and birds predict his decrees by divine inspiration and prompting. That's how crazy fear makes men.⁶

- [III/6] [5] The reason, then, why superstition arises, lasts, and increases, is fear.⁷ If anyone wants particular examples of this, beyond those already mentioned, let him consider Alexander, who began to use seers from genuine superstition⁸ only when he first learned to fear fortune at the
 5 Susidan Gates.⁹ But after he defeated Darius, he stopped consulting soothsayers and seers until an unfavorable turn of events¹⁰ once again terrified him. Because the Bactrians had defected, the Scythians were threatening battle, and he himself was rendered inactive by a wound,
 . . . he lapsed again into superstition, that mocker of men's minds, and ordered Aristander, to whom he had surrendered his credulity, to inquire
 10 into the outcome of things through sacrifices.¹¹

[6] We could give a great many examples like this which would show most clearly that men are tormented by superstition only so long as they are afraid; that all the things they have ever worshipped in illusory religion have been nothing but apparitions, the delusions of a sad and fearful mind; and finally, that it is when states have been in the greatest
 15 difficulties, that seers have had the greatest control over ordinary people, and been most dangerous¹² to their Kings. But I think everyone knows these things well enough; so I'll say no more about them.

6. Spinoza's rhetoric here—*Tantum timor homines insanire facit*—echoes a famous line in Lucretius I, 101: *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum*, how great the evils religion could persuade men to (ALM).

7. Cf. Hobbes' analysis of the natural causes of religion in *Leviathan* xii, 1–11. Hobbes acknowledges no substantive difference between religion and superstition (cf. *Leviathan* vi, 36 with xi, 26). For the origins in Epicurean thought, see Strauss 1965, ch. 1.

8. The phrase *superstitio animi* comes from Quintus Curtius V, iv, 1. I believe the intended contrast is between a superstitious belief sincerely held and the manipulative use of the people's superstitious beliefs, by leaders who do not share them. Cf. Quintus Curtius IV, x, 1–8, cited below at III/6/30. ALM note that Curtius acquired a reputation as a "libertine" historian because of his skepticism concerning prodigies. Next to Tacitus, Curtius is the ancient historian Spinoza cites most frequently (Gebhardt V, 7).

9. *See Quintus Curtius V, iv, [1].* "Susidan Gates" was the name the Persians gave to a mountain pass through which Alexander tried to march with his army, suffering his first serious defeat. See Quintus Curtius V, iii, 16–23.

10. *temporis iniquitate*, an allusion to Quintus Curtius VII, vii, 6.

11. *As Curtius himself says, Bk. VII, §7.* (LCL reads *ludibrium* where Spinoza has *ludibria*.) The influence of fortune, both good and bad, on Alexander's character is a major theme in Curtius, who attributes Alexander's virtues to his nature, and his vices either to his fortune or to his youth. Cf. X, v, 26–36. Among the vices: his aspiration to divine honors and his trust in oracles.

12. *maximeque formidolosos*, alluding to Tacitus, *Agricola* 39 (ALM). That the power of kings is often precarious will be an important theme in the *Political Treatise*. Cf. TP vii, 14, 20.

[7] Some say that superstition arises from the fact that all mortals have a certain confused idea of divinity.¹³ My account of the cause of superstition clearly entails, first, that all men by nature are subject to
 20 superstition; second, that like all mockeries of the mind and impulses of frenzy, it is necessarily very fluctuating and inconstant; and finally, that it is protected only by hope, hate, anger, and deception, because it arises, not from reason, but only from the most powerful affects.

25 [8] As easy, then, as it is to take men in with any superstition whatever, it's still just as difficult to make them persist in one and the same superstition. The common people always remain equally wretched, so they are never satisfied for long. What pleases them most is what is new, and has not yet deceived them. This inconstancy has been the cause of many uprisings and bloody wars. As is evident from what we have
 30 just said, and as Curtius aptly noted, "Nothing governs the multitude more effectively than superstition" (Quintus Curtius, IV, x, 7). That's why they are easily led, under the pretext of religion, now to worship their Kings as Gods, now to curse and loathe them as the common plague of the human race.

[9] To avoid this evil [of inconstancy], immense zeal is brought to
 [III/7] bear to embellish religion—whether the religion is true or illusory—with ceremony and pomp, so that it will be thought to have greater weight than any other influence, and so that everyone will always worship it with the utmost deference. The Turks have succeeded so well at this that they consider it a sacrilege even to debate religion; they fill everyone's judgment with so many prejudices that they leave no room
 5 in the mind for sound reason, nor even for doubting.¹⁴

[10] The greatest secret of monarchic rule,¹⁵ and its main interest, is to keep men deceived, and to cloak in the specious name of Religion the fear by which they must be checked, so that they will fight for slavery as they would for their survival,¹⁶ and will think it not shameful, but a most honorable achievement, to give their life and blood that one

13. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* I, iii–iv. Calvin cites Cicero's *De natura deorum* I, xvi, 43, in support of his claim that God has implanted in all men some understanding of divinity. But he thinks most actual religious practice—both pagan and Roman Catholic—is a superstitious corruption of this knowledge, arising from either ignorance or malice.

14. Cf. Spinoza's comments on Islam in Letter 76, at IV/322/7–12. Pufendorf wrote in a letter to Thomasius that Spinoza owned a copy of the Quran which he had bound with the New Testament, suggesting a certain equivalence between these works in his mind. See Freudenthal/Walther 2006.

15. The expression Spinoza uses here, *regiminis Monarchici . . . arcanum*, echoes a phrase in Tacitus, *arcana imperii* (e.g., in *Annales* II, 36), as noted by ALM, 698. This language was also used in the title of a book by Clapmarius which Spinoza possessed. Gebhardt V, 4, reproduces Clapmarius's definition.

16. *salus*. RT has *vrijheid*, *freedom*, a possible translation of *salus*.

PREFACE

10 man may have a ground for boasting.¹⁷ Nevertheless, in a free republic nothing more unfortunate can be thought of or attempted. For it is completely contrary to the general freedom to fill the free judgment of each man with prejudices, or to restrain it in any way.

[11] As for the rebellions which people stir up under the pretext of
15 religion, they surely arise only because laws are made about speculative matters, opinions are considered crimes and condemned as wicked, and their defenders and followers are sacrificed, not to the public well-being, but only to the hatred and cruelty of their opponents.¹⁸ But if, by the legislation of the state, only *deeds were condemned and words went unpunished*,¹⁹ such rebellions could not be clothed in any pretext
20 of right, nor controversies turned into rebellions.

[12] Since, then, we happen to have that rare good fortune²⁰—that we live in a Republic in which everyone is granted complete freedom of judgment, and is permitted to worship God according to his mentality, and in which nothing is thought to be dearer or sweeter than freedom—I believed I would be doing something neither unwelcome, nor useless,
25 if I showed not only that this freedom can be granted without harm to piety and the peace of the Republic, but also that it cannot be abolished unless piety and the Peace of the Republic are abolished with it.

[13] That's the main thing I resolved to demonstrate in this treatise. To do this it was necessary to indicate the main prejudices regarding religion, i.e., the traces of our ancient bondage, and then also the
30 prejudices regarding the right of the supreme 'powers'.²¹ Many, with the most shameless license, are eager to take away the greater part of

17. An allusion to Quintus Curtius IV, x, 3 (ALM).

18. ALM suggest an allusion to Tacitus, *Annals* XV, xlv, which attributes the persecution of the Christians under Nero to Nero's cruelty rather than to any concern for the public good.

19. An allusion to Tacitus, *Annals* I, lxxii, where the issue is Tiberius' revival of the law of treason, which had originally applied to official misconduct damaging to the state (such as betrayal of an army), but came to be applied to speech critical of the emperor (ALM).

20. *Rara foelicitas*. An allusion to a passage in Tacitus (*Histories* I, i, 4: "in that rare good fortune of the times when it is permitted to think what you like and to say what you think"), which Spinoza will refer to again in §32, in the title of Ch. xx, and in xx, 46. Hume used the same line from Tacitus as the motto for his *Treatise*, a work from which he excised his own treatment of miracles in the hope of winning the approval of Bishop Butler. See Mossner 1980, 112.

In Letter 14 Oldenburg had made a similar claim about the freedom of the Dutch Republic. That Spinoza's praise of the Republic is ironic seems clear from Letter 30, explaining his reasons for writing the TTP, from the fact that he felt obliged to conceal his own identity and that of his publisher on his title page, and from §17 of this Preface. Cf. also the comments on xx, 40, and Israel 1995, 675–76, 789–90. I've discussed these matters in Curley 2015c.

21. On the meaning of the single quote mark before "powers" see the Glossary entry: POWER, 'POWER.

that right, and under the pretext of religion to turn the heart of the multitude (who are still at the mercy of pagan superstition) away from the supreme 'powers, so that everything may collapse again into slavery.²²

I'll indicate briefly in what order I show these things; but first I must

[III/8] say what reasons have impelled me to write.

[14] I've often wondered that men who boast that they profess the Christian religion—i.e., love, gladness, peace, restraint, and good faith toward all—would contend so unfairly against one another, and indulge daily in the bitterest hatred toward one another, so that each man's faith is known more easily from his hatred and contentiousness than from his
5 love, gladness, etc. Long ago things reached the point where you can hardly know what anyone is, whether Christian, Turk, Jew, or Pagan, except by the external dress and adornment of his body, or because he frequents this or that Place of Worship, or because he's attached to this or that opinion, or because he's accustomed to swear by the words of some master.²³ They all lead the same kind of life.

10 [15] What's the cause of this evil? Doubtless that religion has commonly consisted in regarding the ministries of the Church as positions conferring status, its offices as sources of income, and its clergy as deserving the highest honor. For as soon as this abuse began in the Church, the worst men immediately acquired a great desire to administer the sacred offices; the love of propagating divine religion degenerated
15 into sordid greed and ambition; and the temple itself became a Theater, where one hears, not learned ecclesiastics, but orators, each possessed by a longing, not to teach the people, but to carry them away with admiration for himself, to censure publicly those who disagree, and to teach only those new and unfamiliar doctrines which the common
20 people most wonder at. This had to lead to great dissension, envy, and hatred, whose violence no passage of time could lessen.

[16] It's no wonder, then, that nothing has remained of the old Religion but its external ceremony, by which the common people seem more to flatter God than to worship him. No wonder faith is nothing now but credulity and prejudices. And what prejudices! They turn
25 men from rational beings into beasts, since they completely prevent everyone from freely using his judgment and from distinguishing the true from the false, and seem deliberately designed to put out the light of the intellect entirely. [17] Piety—Oh immortal God!—and Religion consist in absurd mysteries, and those who disdain reason completely,
30 and reject and shun the intellect as corrupt by nature—this is what's

22. An allusion to Tacitus, *Annals* i, 7, repeated at TP vii, 2 (ALM).

23. An allusion to Horace's *Epistles* I, 1, v. 14 (ALM). Cf. xii, 7.

most unfair—they are the ones who are thought to have the divine light.²⁴ Of course, if they had even the least spark of divine light, they would not rave so proudly, but would learn to worship God more wisely, and would surpass others in love, not, as now, in hate. If they really feared for the salvation of those who disagree with them, and not for their own position, they would not persecute them in a hostile [III/9] spirit, but pity them.

[18] Moreover, if they had any Divine light, it would at least be manifest from their teaching. I grant that they could never have wondered sufficiently at the most profound mysteries of Scripture. But I don't see that they have taught anything but Aristotelian and Platonic speculations. Not to seem to constantly follow Pagans, they have accom-
5 modated Scripture to these speculations.²⁵ [19] It wasn't enough for them to be insane with the Greeks, they wanted the Prophets to rave with them. This clearly shows, of course, that they don't see the divinity of Scripture, not even in a dream. The more extravagantly they wonder at these mysteries, the more they show that they don't so much believe Scripture as give lip service to it.

10 This is also evident from the fact that most of them presuppose, as a foundation for understanding Scripture and unearthing its true meaning, that it is everywhere true and divine. So what we ought to establish by understanding Scripture, and subjecting it to a strict examination, and what we would be far better taught by Scripture itself, which needs no human inventions, they maintain at the outset as a rule for the
15 interpretation of Scripture.²⁶

[20] When I weighed these matters in my mind—when I considered that the natural light is not only disdained, but condemned by many as a source of impiety, that human inventions are treated as divine teachings, that credulity is valued as faith, that the controversies of the Philosophers are debated with the utmost passion in the Church and in the State, and that in consequence the most savage hatreds and
20 disagreements arise, by which men are easily turned to rebellions—when

24. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* II, ii, 18–21. Cf. below §23 and xv, 10.

25. Cf. below, i, 19; xiii, 5; and Curley 2002.

26. Cf. Manasseh 1842/1972, I, ix: “The Bible being in the highest degree true, it cannot contain any text really contradictory of another.” Calvin also seems committed to the consistency of Scripture, taking “the beautiful agreement of all the parts with one another” to provide confirmation of the divine origin of its doctrine, from which its truth and consistency would seem to follow. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, I, viii, 1. See also his references to the prophets as taking ‘dictation’ from the Holy Spirit (e.g., in *Institutes* IV, viii, 6) and to the apostles as “sure and genuine scribes of the Holy Spirit” (*Institutes* IV, viii, 9). But Calvin’s position on this issue is a matter of dispute among those who study him. See McNeill 1959, and Dowey 1994.

I considered these and a great many other things, which it would take too long to tell here, I resolved earnestly to examine Scripture afresh, with an unprejudiced and free spirit, to affirm nothing about it, and to admit nothing as its teaching, which it did not very clearly teach me.²⁷

25 [21] With this precaution I constructed a Method of interpreting the Sacred books, and equipped with this, I began by asking, first of all [in Ch. 1]: what was Prophecy? and in what way did God reveal himself to the Prophets? why were these men accepted by God? was it because they had lofty thoughts about God and nature, or only because of their piety? Once I knew the answers to these questions, I
30 was easily able to determine [in Ch. 2, III/42/26ff.] that the authority of the Prophets has weight only in those matters which bear on the practice of life and on true virtue, but that their opinions²⁸ are of little concern to us.

[22] Knowing this, I next asked [in Ch. 3] why the Hebrews were called God's chosen people? When I saw that this was only because God had chosen a certain land for them, where they could live securely and
[III/10] comfortably, from that I learned that the Laws God revealed to Moses were nothing but the legislation of the particular state of the Hebrews, and that no one else was obliged to accept them, indeed that even the Hebrews were bound by them only so long as their state lasted.

[23] Next, to know whether Scripture implies that the human intellect
5 is corrupt by nature, I wanted to ask [in Chs. 4 and 5] whether universal Religion, *or* the divine law revealed to the whole human race through the Prophets and Apostles, was anything other than what the natural light also teaches? [and in Ch. 6] whether miracles happen contrary to the order of nature? and whether they teach God's existence and providence any more certainly and clearly than do things we understand
10 clearly and distinctly through their first causes?

[24] But since I found nothing in what Scripture expressly teaches which did not agree with the intellect, or which would contradict it, and moreover, since I saw that the Prophets taught only very simple things, which everyone could easily perceive, and that they embellished these things in that style, and confirmed them with those reasons, by
15 which they could most readily move the mind of the multitude to devotion toward God, I was fully persuaded that Scripture leaves reason absolutely free, and that it has nothing in common with Philosophy, but that each rests on its own foundation.

27. The project, then, is fundamentally an extension of Cartesian method into an area where Descartes himself had not dared to tread. I've discussed this in Curley 1994.

28. That is, their speculations about God and nature. Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan* viii, 26.

[25] To demonstrate these things conclusively,²⁹ and to settle the whole matter, I show [in Ch. 7] how Scripture is to be interpreted, and
 20 that our whole knowledge of it and of spiritual matters must be sought from Scripture alone, and not from those things we know by the natural light. From this I pass to showing [in Chs. 8–11] what prejudices have arisen from the fact that the common people, enslaved to superstition and loving the remnants of time more than eternity itself, worship the books of Scripture rather than the Word of God itself.

25 [26] After this, I show [Chs. 12 and 13] that the revealed Word of God is not some certain number of books, but a simple concept of the divine mind revealed to the Prophets: to obey God wholeheartedly, by practicing justice and loving-kindness. And I show that this is what Scripture teaches, according to the power of understanding and opinions of those to whom the Prophets and Apostles were accustomed to preach this Word of God. They did this so that men would embrace
 30 the Word of God without any conflict and with their whole heart.

[27] Having shown the fundamentals of faith [in Ch. 14], I conclude finally that revealed knowledge has no object but obedience, and indeed that it is entirely distinct from natural knowledge, both in its object and in its foundation and means. Revealed knowledge has nothing in common with natural knowledge, but each is in charge of its own
 [III/11] domain, without any conflict with the other. [In Chapter 15 I show that] neither ought to be the handmaid of the other.³⁰

[28] Next, because men vary greatly in their mentality, because one is content with these opinions, another with those, and because what moves one person to religion moves another to laughter, from these considerations, together with what has been said above, I conclude that
 5 each person must be allowed freedom of judgment and the 'power to interpret the foundations of faith according to his own mentality. We must judge the piety of each person's faith from his works alone. In this way everyone will be able to obey God with an unprejudiced and free spirit, and everyone will prize only justice and loving-kindness.

[29] After showing the freedom the revealed divine law grants everyone, I proceed to the second part of the question: [to show] that this

29. Note that Spinoza presents the argument of the first six chapters as leading (non-demonstratively) to one of the principal conclusions of his work: that philosophy and theology are independent of one another (cf. Ch. xiv). But up to this point he has not explained the new method for interpreting Scripture (mentioned in §21) which equipped him to reach this conclusion. In Ch. vii he will explain the method, and then begin re-arguing the conclusion. His claim is that the revised argument is demonstrative.

30. ALM cite various medieval theologians who had held that philosophy should be subservient to (the handmaid of) theology, most notably Aquinas ST (I, qu. 1, art. 5) and Albertus Magnus (*Summa theologiae* Bk. I, Part I, Tractatus I, qu. 6). Cf. below §34.

10 same freedom not only can be granted without harm to the peace of the republic and the right of the supreme 'powers, but also that it must be granted, and cannot be taken away without great danger to the peace and great harm to the whole Republic.

To demonstrate these conclusions, I begin [in Ch. 16] with the
 15 natural right of each person, which extends as far as each person's desire and power extend. By the right of nature no one is bound to live according to another person's mentality, but each one is the defender of his own freedom. [30] Moreover, I show that no one really gives up this right unless he transfers his 'power to defend himself to someone else, and that the person³¹ who must necessarily retain this natural right absolutely is the one to whom everyone has transferred,
 20 together with his 'power to defend himself, his right to live according to his own mentality.

From this I show that those who have the sovereignty have the right to do whatever they can do, that they alone are the defenders of right and freedom, and that everyone else ought always to act according to their decree alone. [31] But no one can so deprive himself³² of his 'power to defend himself that he ceases to be a man. From this I
 25 infer [in Ch. 17] that no one can be absolutely deprived of his natural right, but that subjects retain, as by a right of nature, certain things which cannot be taken from them without great danger to the state. If these things are not expressly agreed on with those who have the sovereignty, they are tacitly granted to the subjects.

From these considerations, I pass to the Republic of the Hebrews [Chs. 17 and 18], which I describe at sufficient length to show how, and
 30 by whose³³ decree, Religion began to have the force of law; in passing I also show other things which seemed worth knowing. [32] Then I show [Ch. 19] that those who have sovereignty are the defenders and interpreters, not only of civil law, but also of sacred law, and that they alone have the right to decide what is just, what is unjust, what is pious and what impious. And finally [Ch. 20], I conclude that the sovereign
 [III/12] powers retain this right best, and can preserve their rule safely, only if everyone is allowed to think what he will, and to say what he thinks.³⁴

31. "The person" translates a personal pronoun which, as Bennett notes, might refer to either an individual or a collective agent.

32. The first edition has *privare*. Most editors (e.g., Gebhardt, Akkerman, et al.) emend to *se privare*; V-L (1914) emended to *privari*. Cf. xvii, 1, III/201/14–15.

33. Spinoza uses a plural pronoun here, implying that it was by human decree that religion began to have the force of law.

34. A recurrence of the allusion to Tacitus in §12, which also appears at III/239 and III/247.

PREFACE

[33] These, Philosophical reader,³⁵ are the things I here give you to examine. I trust that the importance and utility of the argument, both
5 in the work as a whole and in each chapter, will make it welcome. I might add several more things about this, but I don't want this preface to grow into a book, particularly since I believe the main points³⁶ are more than adequately known to Philosophers. As for those who are not philosophers, I am not eager to commend this treatise to them. There's nothing in it which I might hope could please them in any way. I know
10 how stubbornly the mind retains those prejudices the heart has embraced under the guise of piety. I know also that it's as impossible to save the common people from superstition as it is from fear. And I know, finally, that what the common people call constancy is obstinacy. It's not governed by reason, but carried away by an impulse to praise or to blame.

[34] I don't ask the common people to read these things, nor anyone else who is struggling with the same affects as the common people.
15 Indeed, I would prefer them to neglect this book entirely,³⁷ rather than make trouble by interpreting it perversely, as they usually do with everything. They will do themselves no good, but will harm others who would philosophize more freely if they weren't prevented by this one thought: that reason ought to be the handmaid of theology. For [those who need only to be set free of that prejudice], I'm confident that this work will be extremely useful.

20 [35] But since many will have neither the leisure nor perhaps the disposition to read through everything I've written, I'm constrained to warn here also, as I do at the end of this Treatise, that I write nothing which I do not most willingly submit to the examination and judgment

35. A critical passage for the interpretation of the TTP. Who are the intended audience for Spinoza's work? For conflicting views, see Strauss 1988, 162–63; Harris 1978, 3; Donagan 1988, 14–15; and Smith 1997, 38–54. I take it that Spinoza is, as he appears to be, addressing the philosophical reader. But this does not necessarily mean that he is addressing only fully formed philosophers. I believe he particularly wants to address those would-be philosophers whose thinking is hampered by a prejudice about the authority of Scripture (see the end of §34, and cf. my comment on his correspondence with Van Blijenbergh, *Collected Works*, I, 350). I believe that exchange persuaded him that to secure a sympathetic hearing for his own work, he would have to show that in cases of conflict, the teachings of Scripture regarding speculative matters are not to be preferred to the demonstrations of philosophers. Cf. Letter 21 (IV/126) and Letter 23 (IV/145).

36. It would be highly paradoxical to write a book whose main points you took to be already known by its intended audience. But this sentence need not mean (as some have thought) that the main points of the book are already well-known to philosophers, only that the main points *Spinoza would make if he extended the Preface* are already well-known to philosophers. The best candidate for a philosopher who grasped the main points of the book is Hobbes, but he was unusual for his time both in his critical approach to Scripture and in the secular basis he provided for political theory. On the relation between Hobbes and Spinoza, see Curley 1992, 1994, and 1996.

37. Hence he discouraged translation of this work into Dutch. See Letter 44.

of the supreme 'Powers of my Country. For if they judge that any of the things I say are in conflict with the laws of my country, or harmful to the general welfare, I wish to withdraw it. I know that I am a man
 25 and may have erred.³⁸ Still, I have taken great care not to err, and taken care especially that whatever I might write would be entirely consistent with the laws of my country, with piety and with morals.

[III/15]

CHAPTER I Of Prophecy

5 [1] Prophecy, *or* Revelation, is the certain knowledge of some matter which God has revealed to men. And a Prophet is one who interprets God's revelations to those who cannot have certain knowledge of them, and who therefore can only embrace what has been revealed by simple
 10 faith. For among the Hebrews a Prophet is called נביא, *nabi*,^{1**} that is, spokesman and interpreter. But Scripture always uses this term for an interpreter of God, as we can infer from Exodus 7:1, where God says to Moses: *See, I make you a God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your Prophet.* This is as if he were to say that since Aaron performs the part of a Prophet, by interpreting what you say to Pharaoh, you will
 15 therefore be like a God to Pharaoh, *or* one who acts in place of God.

[2] In the following Chapter we will discuss Prophets. Here the subject is Prophecy. From the definition just given, it follows that natural knowledge can be called Prophecy. For what we know by the natural
 20 light depends only on the knowledge of God and of his² eternal decrees.

38. Alluding to a line from Terence's *Heautontimorumenos* 77. Cf. x, 36; xx, 470.

1. **[ADN. I] If the third letter of the root of a word is quiescent, it is usually omitted and in its place the second letter of the stem is doubled. For example, omitting the quiescent ה from קלה we get קולל, and from that קול, and from נבא [to prophesy] comes נובב, from which we get ניב שפתיים [the fruit of the lips] *utterance or speech*. Thus בוז becomes בוז or בז (and from משגה comes שגה; שג, and שגה becomes המה; and בלה becomes בלל and בלעל). Therefore, R. Solomon Jarghi [Rashi] has interpreted this word נבא best; but Ibn Ezra, who did not know the Hebrew language so exactly, was mistaken in his criticism of him. Moreover, it should be noted that the term נבואה, *prophecy*, is quite general, and covers every kind of prophesying, whereas the other terms are more specific and apply chiefly to this or that kind of prophesying. I believe this is well-known to the learned. [Rashi glossed נביא as *interpreter*. See his commentary on Exod. 7:1, in Rashi 1960, II, 29. Ibn Ezra understood נביא as *spokesman*. Spinoza had the commentaries of both authors available to him in Buxtorf's Bible.]

2. It's worth noting that in contexts like this Spinoza's Latin uses a pronoun which implies neither gender nor even personality. In principle *ejus* could be rendered either

But because this natural knowledge is common to all men (depending, as it does, on foundations common to all), the common people, who always thirst for things rare and foreign to their nature, who spurn their natural gifts, do not value it highly. When they speak of prophetic
 25 knowledge, they mean to exclude natural knowledge.

[3] Nevertheless, we can call natural knowledge divine with as much right as anything else, since God's nature, insofar as we participate in it, and his decrees, as it were, dictate it to us.³ It differs from the knowledge everyone calls divine only in two respects: the knowledge people call divine extends beyond the limits of natural knowledge, and the laws
 30 of human Nature, considered in themselves, cannot be the cause of the knowledge people call divine. But natural knowledge is in no way
 [III/16] inferior to prophetic knowledge in the certainty it involves, or in the source from which it is derived, viz. God—unless, perhaps, someone wants to understand (or rather to dream) that the Prophets had, indeed, a human body, but not a human mind, and thus that their sensations
 5 and consciousness were of an entirely different nature than ours are.

[4] Though natural knowledge is divine, nevertheless those who pass it on cannot be called Prophets.^{4**} For they teach things other men can perceive and embrace with as much certainty and excellence as they do,

"his," "her," or "its." In English we must either adopt an ugly neologism or choose one of these pronouns, which makes Spinoza sound more specific than he is. How much should we make of this? Not too much, I think. The next word in this phrase, "decrees," certainly suggests a personal agent. And even traditional theologians who use the masculine pronoun in relation to God, do not normally think of God as literally having a gender. More significant is Spinoza's talk of decrees, which reflects a willingness to express his thought in a way he knows may mislead some readers into thinking that he is closer to the tradition than he really is.

3. Gebhardt notes that Meyer expresses a similar view (Meyer 1666, 43, = v, 7). ALM compare Aquinas ST I, qu. 12, art. 11, ad 3.

4. **[ADN. II] That is, interpreters of God. For an interpreter of God is one who interprets God's decrees to others to whom they have not been revealed, and who, in embracing them, rely only on the authority of the prophet. But if the men who listened to prophets became prophets, as those who listen to philosophers become philosophers, then the prophet would not be an interpreter of the divine decrees, since his hearers would rely, not on the testimony and authority of the prophet, but on revelation itself, and internal testimony. Thus the sovereign powers are the interpreters of the law of their state, because the laws they pass are preserved only by their authority and depend only on their testimony. [This note, as I have translated it, is essentially the version we have in the copy of the TTP Spinoza gave Jacob Klefmann. See the Editorial Preface to the TTP, pp. 60–63, for a discussion of the sources for these notes. We have four other sources for the note, which differ from this version mainly in small ways. The most interesting variation, found in all the other sources, has, instead of the phrase underlined above: "and their certainty depends only on the authority of the prophet and the faith they have in him." The thought is reminiscent of Hobbes' *Leviathan* vii, 7. I propose that since the other four versions are later than the Klefmann version, their consistency suggests that after writing notes in the Klefmann volume, Spinoza decided that this formula expressed his thought more clearly.]

10 and not by faith alone. [5] Therefore, since our mind—simply from the fact that it contains God’s Nature objectively in itself, and participates in it—has the power to form certain notions which explain the nature of things and teach us how to conduct our lives, we can rightly maintain that the nature of the mind, insofar as it is conceived in this way, is the
 15 first cause of divine revelation. For whatever we clearly and distinctly understand, the idea and nature of God dictates to us (as we have just indicated), not indeed in words, but in a far more excellent way, which agrees best with the nature of the mind. Anyone who has tasted the certainty of the intellect must have experienced this in himself.

20 [6] But my principal purpose is to speak only of what concerns Scripture. So these few words about the natural Light are enough. Now I’ll discuss in greater detail the other causes and means by which God reveals to men things which exceed the limits of natural knowledge—and even those which do not exceed them. For nothing prevents God from communicating to men in other ways the same things we know
 25 by the light of nature.

[7] But whatever can be said about these matters must be sought only from Scripture. For what can we say about things exceeding the limits of our intellect beyond what’s been handed down to us, either orally or in writing, from the Prophets themselves? And because today,
 30 so far as I know, we have no Prophets,⁵ our only option is to expound the sacred books left us by the Prophets. But with this precaution: we should not maintain anything about such matters, or attribute anything to the Prophets themselves, which they did not say clearly and repeatedly.

[8] Here it is to be noted particularly that the Jews never mention—nor do they heed—intermediate, *or* particular, causes,⁶ but for the
 [III/17] sake of religion and of piety, *or* (as is commonly said) of devotion, they always recur to God. For example, if they have made money by trade,

5. Whether prophecy had actually ceased at some point in history has been a matter of dispute in both the Jewish and the Christian traditions. Certainly claims to prophecy did not cease, as the case of Sabbatai Zevi illustrates. See the note on Zevi in Letter 33, IV/178/26, and Goldish 2004. Some seventeenth-century Christian sects also claimed a contemporary power of prophecy (see Kolakowski 1969). These included the Collegiants, with whom Spinoza otherwise had much in common (cf. Nadler 1999, 139–41). But because of the difficulty of distinguishing true prophets from false, and the tendency of prophecy to challenge the religious status quo, religious institutions often opposed them. For a helpful discussion, see Sommer 1996. Talmudic passages on the disappearance of prophecy include Sanhedrin 11a and Sota 48b. Maimonides’ view seems to be that prophecy was taken away during the exile and will be restored when the Messiah comes. Cf. *Guide* II, 36.

6. For this view Spinoza could have cited the authority of Maimonides’ *Guide* II, 48. Cf. below, §§30–31. ALM also note Spinoza’s *Hebrew Grammar*, ch. 12: “The Hebrews are accustomed to refer an action to its principal cause, which brings it about either that an action is done by something/someone, or that a thing fulfills its function” (I/341/18).

they say that God has given it to them; if they desire that something should happen, they say that God has so disposed their heart; and if they even think something, they say that God has told them this. So we must not regard as Prophecy and supernatural knowledge everything Scripture says God has told someone, but only what Scripture explicitly says was Prophecy *or* revelation, or whose status as prophecy follows from the circumstances of the narration.

[9] If, then, we run through the Sacred books, we will see that everything God revealed to the Prophets was revealed to them either in words, or in visible forms, or in both words and visible forms. The words and the visible forms were either true, and outside the imagination of the Prophet who heard or saw them, or else imaginary, occurring because the imagination of the Prophet was so disposed, even while he was awake, that he clearly seemed to himself to hear words or to see something.⁷

[10] It was by a true voice that God revealed to Moses the Laws he willed to be prescribed to the Hebrews, as is evident from Exodus 25:22, where he says *ונועדתי לך שם ודברתי אתך מעל הכפורת מבין שני הכרובים* and *I will be available to you there, and I will speak with you from that part of the cover which is between the two cherubim*. This indeed shows that God used a true voice, since Moses used to find God there, available to speak to him, whenever he wanted to. And as I shall soon show, this voice by which the law was pronounced was the only true voice.

[11] I would suspect that the voice with which God called Samuel was a true one, because in 1 Samuel 3:21 it is said: *ויוסף יהוה להראה בשלה* and *God appeared again to Samuel in Shiloh because God revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of God*⁸—as if he were saying that God’s appearance to Samuel was nothing but God’s revealing himself to Samuel by his word, or was nothing but Samuel’s hearing God speaking. But because we are forced to distinguish between the Prophecy of Moses and that of the rest of the Prophets, we must say that the voice Samuel heard was imaginary.⁹

7. Insofar as Spinoza emphasizes the importance of the imagination in prophecy, his view is similar to that of Maimonides. Cf. the *Guide* II, 32–48. Maimonides’ view is that prophecy normally requires intellectual perfection (through study of the speculative sciences), moral perfection (through the suppression of improper desires), and perfection of the imagination. But he does make an exception for Moses, whose prophecy is supposed to have involved only the intellect, not the imagination. See particularly *Guide* II, 36. The treatment of prophecy in Aquinas ST II-II, qu. 171–74, is quite different. Spinoza’s disagreements with Maimonides will emerge gradually, beginning in i, 43.

8. The first occurrence of “to Samuel” in this quote is lacking in the Hebrew. For the use of the divine name here, see the Glossary entry GOD.

9. Presumably we are forced to this interpretation by the passage from Num. 12:6–8, to be cited at III/20/13. But Numbers forces that interpretation only if we assume that

We can also infer this from the fact that the voice resembled that of Eli, which Samuel was very accustomed to hearing, and so could also more readily imagine. For although God called him three times, he [III/18] thought that Eli had called him.¹⁰

[12] The voice Abimelech heard was imaginary. For Genesis 20:6 says: *And God said to him in his dreams* etc. So he was able to imagine the will of God, not while he was awake, but only in dreams (i.e., at that time when the imagination is naturally most suited to imagine 5 things which do not exist).

[13] In the opinion of certain Jews, God did not utter the words of the Decalogue.¹¹ They think, rather, that the Israelites only heard a sound, which did not utter any words, and that while this sound lasted, they perceived the Laws of the Decalogue with a pure mind. At one time I too was inclined to think this, because I saw that the words of 10 the Decalogue in Exodus are not the same as those of the Decalogue in Deuteronomy.¹² Since God spoke only once, it seems to follow from this [variation] that the Decalogue does not intend to teach God's very words, but only their meaning.

[14] But unless we wish to do violence to Scripture, we absolutely must grant that the Israelites heard a true voice. For Scripture expressly 15 says, in Deuteronomy 5:4 *וְהוּא יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם דְּבַר יְהוָה פָּנִים בְּפָנִים face to face God spoke to you etc.*,¹³ that is, as two men usually communicate their concepts to one another, by means of their two bodies. So it seems more compatible with Scripture to think that God truly created some voice,

1 Samuel must be consistent with Numbers. The Preface has warned us (in §19) that this assumption is not safe.

10. See 1 Sam. 3:4–9. Cf. Maimonides *Guide* II, 44.

11. Maimonides *Guide* II, 33, argues that at Mount Sinai Moses alone heard God's words. All the people heard was a great voice, not words. Halevi 1964, I, 87, argues that they heard the words. There are reasons to think that all the people heard the first two commandments, but that Moses alone heard the rest, and then conveyed them to the people. See Kugel 2007, 251–53.

12. This rare autobiographical remark may give us insight into the kinds of concern which led to Spinoza's break with the synagogue. Manasseh's *Conciliator* (I, 170–75) discusses several differences between the two accounts of the Decalogue (in Exod. 20:1–17 and Deut. 5:1–21). Some may strike modern readers as rather minor (unless they are committed to a strong position about the historical accuracy of the two accounts). The most significant difference, probably, occurs in the explanation of the commandment regarding the Sabbath. Exodus instructs the Jews not to labor on the Sabbath in remembrance of God's having rested on the seventh day of creation. Deuteronomy commands them not to labor on the Sabbath in remembrance of God's freeing them from bondage in the land of Egypt. Spinoza will return to this topic at the end of viii, 55.

13. These are Moses' words to the people, so the pronoun, both in the Hebrew and in Spinoza's Latin, is plural. *Prima facie* this conflicts with Num. 12:6–8, discussed below, in §21.

by which he himself revealed the Decalogue.¹⁴ As for the explanation
 20 of why the words and reasons of the one version differ from those of
 the other, see Chapter 8.¹⁵

[15] However, this doesn't remove every difficulty. For it seems quite
 unreasonable to maintain that a created thing, dependent on God in
 the same way as any other, could express, in reality or in words, or
 25 explain through his own person, the essence or existence of God, by
 saying in the first person, "I am the LORD your God, etc."¹⁶ Of course,
 when someone says orally "I have understood," no one thinks that the
 mouth of the man saying this has understood, but only that his mind
 has. Nevertheless, because the mouth is related to the nature of the
 man saying this, and also because he to whom it is said has previously
 30 perceived the nature of the intellect, he easily understands the thought
 of the man speaking by comparison with his own. [16] But since these
 people knew nothing of God but his name, and wanted to speak to
 him to become certain of his Existence, I do not see how their request
 would be fulfilled by a creature who was no more related to God than
 any other creature, and who did not pertain to God's nature, saying
 [III/19] "I am God." What if God had twisted Moses' lips to pronounce and
 say the same words, "I am God"? Would they have understood from
 that that God exists? What if they were the lips, not of Moses, but of
 some beast?¹⁷

[17] Next, Scripture seems to indicate, without qualification, that
 5 God himself spoke—that was why he descended from heaven to the
 top of Mt. Sinai—and that the Jews not only heard him speaking, but
 that the Elders even saw him. See Exodus 24[:10–11].¹⁸

The Law revealed to Moses (to which nothing could be added and
 from which nothing could be taken away, and which was established as
 the legislation of their Country) never commanded us to believe that
 10 God is incorporeal, or that he has no image *or* visible form, but only

14. This was the opinion of Maimonides (*Guide* II, 33).

15. At the end of Ch. viii (§§55–58) and at the beginning of Ch. ix (§§1–3) Spinoza will return to this topic, explaining that the variations between the two versions of the Decalogue resulted from the history of the composition of the text. Here he is content merely to catalogue some of the difficulties which face more traditional interpreters.

16. Spinoza writes *ego sum Jehova Deus tuus*. In general I prefer to use "Yahweh" when Spinoza writes *Jehova*. (See the Glossary entry GOD, YAHWEH.) But in this instance it seemed best to use the language which has been traditional in English versions of the passages Spinoza is quoting (Exod. 20:2 and Deut. 5:6).

17. This was a problem which concerned Spinoza early in his career. Cf. KV II, xxiv, 10. ALM discuss a parallel passage in Balling's *Het licht op den kandelaar*, p. 8. For a modern edition of this work, see Klever 1988.

18. Discussed in Manasseh 1842/1972, I, 186–89, because of its apparent conflict with Exod. 33:20.

to believe that God exists, to trust in him, and to worship him alone. It did command them not to ascribe any image to him, and not to make any image of him. But this was to prevent them from departing from his worship. [18] For since they had not seen the image of God, they could not make an image which would resemble God, but only
 15 one which would resemble some other created thing they had seen. So when they worshipped God through that image, they would think, not about God, but about the thing the image resembled. In the end they would bestow on that thing the honor and worship due to God.

But Scripture clearly indicates that God has a visible form and that it was granted to Moses, when he heard God speaking, to look upon
 20 it, though he was permitted to see only the back.¹⁹ I do not doubt but what there is some mystery concealed here, which we shall discuss more fully later.²⁰ For now I shall continue to show the places where Scripture indicates the means God used to reveal his decrees to men.

[19] That Revelation [sometimes] happened by images alone is evident from 1 Chronicles 21[:16] where God shows his anger to David through an Angel holding a sword in his hand. Similarly [God showed his anger] to Balaam [in the same way].²¹ Maimonides and others claim that this story, and likewise all those that tell the appearance of an angel (e.g., to Manoah [Judges 13:8–20], and to Abraham when he was intending to sacrifice his son [Genesis 22:11–18]), happened in a
 30 dream,²² because a person could not see an Angel with his eyes open. But that's nonsense, of course. Their only concern is to extort from Scripture Aristotelian rubbish and their own inventions. Nothing seems to me more ridiculous.

[20] On the other hand, when God revealed his future Dominion
 35 to Joseph [Genesis 37:5–10], he used images which were not real, but depended only on the imagination of the Prophet.

[III/20] God used both images and words to reveal to Joshua that he would fight for the [Israelites]. He showed him an Angel with a sword [who came] as commander of the army [Joshua 5:13]. He had [previously] revealed this to him in words [Joshua 1:1–9, 3:7] and Joshua heard it [again] from the Angel [Joshua 5:14].

19. See Exod. 33:20–23. Discussed in Manasseh 1842/1972, I, 201–2, because of its apparent conflict with Exod. 33:11 and Num. 12:8.

20. ALM suggest that Spinoza has in mind the discussion (in Ch. xv) of Alfakhar, who held that because Scripture teaches clearly that God is incorporeal, passages apparently to the contrary must be interpreted metaphorically. But he may also be referring to the discussion of the inadequacy of Moses' conception of God in ii, 41–46.

21. See Num. 22:22–35. Since Balaam not only saw the angel, but heard him speak, this seems better as an example of a revelation through both words and visible forms.

22. See Maimonides *Guide* II, 41–42.

To Isaiah also, as we are told in ch. 6, it was represented through visible forms that God's providence was deserting the people: he imagined God thrice holy, seated on a throne on high, and the Israelites stained with the uncleanness of their sins, as if mired in a dung-heap, and indeed, very distant from God. By these [visible forms] he understood that the present state of the people was most wretched. On the other hand, the people's future calamities were revealed to him in words, pronounced as if by God.²³ I could add many other examples of this pattern from the Sacred Texts, if I did not think these matters were well enough known to everyone.

[21] But all these things are confirmed more clearly from the text of Numbers 12:[6–8], which reads:

- 15 אם יהיה נביאכם יהוה במראה אליו אתודע בחלום אדבר בו לא כן עבדי משה וכו פה אל
 if there is some Prophet of God
 among you, I shall reveal myself to him in a vision

(that is, through visible forms and obscure symbols, for of the Prophecy of Moses he says that it is a vision without obscure symbols),

I shall speak to him in dreams

(that is, not with real words and a true voice).

- 20 But to Moses (I do) not (reveal myself) in this way, etc.; to him I speak face to face, and in a vision, but not with enigmatic sayings; and he looks upon the image of God,²⁴

that is, he looks upon me as a companion and is not terrified when he speaks with me, as is maintained in Exodus 33:11. So there can be no doubt that the other Prophets did not hear a true voice. This is confirmed still further by Deuteronomy 34:10, where it is said that
 25 ולא קם נביא עוד בישראל כמשה אשר ידעו יהוה פנים אל פנים *there never existed (strictly, arose) in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom God knew face to face.*
 This must be understood to refer to the voice alone. For not even Moses had ever seen God's face (Exodus 33:[20]).²⁵

23. *tanquam a Deo prolatis*. *Tanquam* need not imply that God did not in fact pronounce the words. But the beginning of the next paragraph seems to favor a counterfactual reading.

24. Spinoza will return to this passage in viii, 15–16, where he will cite it as one among many indicating that the true author of the Pentateuch was not Moses, but someone writing at a much later date. HCSB observes that this passage “probably reflects the issues of a later day, when groups who traced their authority to Moses were in a power struggle with groups who traced their authority to Miriam or Aaron.” For a fuller discussion, see Levine 1993, 328–31.

25. Though as Spinoza has noted above (§18), Moses was permitted to see God's back. On Moses' unique relationship to God, see Maimonides *Guide* II, 35; Aquinas ST IIa IIae, qu. 174, art. 4; and Hobbes, *Leviathan* xxxvi, 11.

30 [22] I do not find in the Sacred Texts any other means by which God communicated himself to men.²⁶ So, as we have shown above, we must not feign or admit any others. Of course, we clearly understand that God can communicate himself immediately to men, for he communicates his essence to our mind without using any corporeal means. Nevertheless, for a man to perceive by the mind alone things which
[III/21] aren't contained in the first foundations of our knowledge, and can't be deduced from them, his mind would necessarily have to be more excellent than, and far superior to, the human mind.

[23] So I do not believe that anyone else has reached such perfection, surpassing all others, except Christ, to whom the decisions of God, which lead men to salvation, were revealed immediately—without words or visions. So God revealed himself to the Apostles through Christ's mind, as previously he had revealed himself to Moses by means of a heavenly voice. And therefore Christ's voice, like the one Moses heard,
10 can be called the voice of God. And in this sense we can also say that God's Wisdom, that is, a Wisdom surpassing human wisdom, assumed a human nature in Christ, and that Christ was the way to salvation.²⁷

[24] But I must warn here that I'm not speaking in any way about the things some of the Churches maintain about Christ. Not that I deny
15 them. For I readily confess that I don't grasp them.²⁸ What I have just affirmed I conclude from Scripture itself. Nowhere have I read that God appeared or spoke to Christ, but rather that God was revealed to the Apostles through Christ, that he is the way to salvation [John 14:6], and finally, that the old law was imparted by an Angel, but not by God

26. Spinoza will return to this conclusion at i, 43, and again invoke his principle that we must not ascribe to Scripture doctrines which we do not find clearly stated there. The intervening sections seem intended to deflate the idea of divine inspiration.

27. Since Latin has no articles, the text does not explicitly say that Christ is *the* way to salvation, but I think no harm is done by supplying the definite article (as Glazemaker did), provided we understand this statement in a way which does not conflict with Spinoza's fundamental pluralism: not that we can achieve salvation only by believing that the son of God atoned for the sins of mankind through his death on the cross, but that we achieve salvation by living according to Jesus' central moral teachings: to love God and our neighbors, and to practice justice. The former interpretation would seem to be excluded by v, 46; xv, 44; xvi, 57; and Letters 73 and 76. In Curley 2010, I argued that Spinoza was a pluralist (in the sense of believing that many religions offer a viable path to salvation). In TP ii, 6 Spinoza rejects the doctrine of original sin, a key support for the view that salvation is based on faith in Christ, and not on obedience to the laws of God.

28. In Letter 71 (IV/304/14ff.) Oldenburg reported that some readers of the TTP felt that he was concealing his opinion concerning Jesus Christ, "the Redeemer of the World and only Mediator for men." When Oldenburg asked for clarification of Spinoza's views, his response (Letter 73, IV/309/2) went beyond saying merely that he did not understand what certain churches mean when they say that God assumed a human nature in Christ. He said he found that doctrine absurd and contradictory. For further discussion, see Matheron 1971, 256–58.

20 immediately. So, if Moses spoke with God face to face, as a man usually does with a companion (i.e., by means of their two bodies), Christ, indeed, communicated with God mind to mind.

[25] We have asserted, then, that except for Christ no one has received God's revelations without the aid of the imagination, i.e., without the
25 aid of words or images. So no one needed to have a more perfect mind in order to prophesy, but only a more vivid imagination. I shall show this more clearly in the following chapter.

Now the question is what the Sacred Texts understand by the Spirit of God when they say that the Prophets were infused²⁹ with the Spirit of God, or that the Prophets spoke by the Spirit of God. To investigate this, first we must ask about the meaning of the Hebrew term רוח
30 *ruagh*, which people commonly translate "Spirit."³⁰

[26] In its proper sense the term רוח *ruagh* means wind, as is generally known. But it is quite often used to mean many other things, which are nevertheless derived from the proper sense. For it is taken to mean

1. breath, as in Psalm 135:17, אף אין יש רוח בפיהם *there is no Spirit in their mouth*.

[III/22] 2. air or breathing, as in 1 Samuel 30:12, וחשב רוחו אליו *and his Spirit returned to him*, i.e., he recovered his breath.

From this it is taken for

3. courage and strength, as in Joshua 2:11, ולא קמה עוד רוח באיש *afterward there was no Spirit left in any man*. Similarly, Ezekiel 2:2, ותבא בי רוח ותעמידני *and a Spirit (or force) came into me, which made me stand upon my feet*.

From this it is taken for

5 4. excellence and ability, as in Job 32:8, אכן רוח היא באנוש *certainly it is the Spirit itself in a man*, that is, 'knowledge is not to be sought exclusively among the old, for I find now that it depends on the particular excellence and capacity of the man. So also Numbers 27:18, איש אשר רוח בו *a man in whom there is Spirit*.

[27] Next, it is taken for

10 5. the sentiment of the heart, as in Numbers 14:24, עקב היתה רוח אחרת עמו, *since another Spirit was in him*, that is, another sentiment of the heart, or another mind. Similarly, Proverbs 1:23, אביעה לכם רוחי *I shall express my Spirit* (i.e.,

29. Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan* ii, 9.

30. Spinoza discusses the scriptural meaning of *ruagh* in §§26–28. In §§29–31 he proceeds to discuss what it means in Scripture when something is said to be "of God." Finally, in §§32–39, he concludes by applying the results of this analysis to the complex expressions *ruagh Elobim* or *ruagh Yabweb*. The Latin term Spinoza uses for *ruagh*, *Spiritus*, has much of the ambiguity of *ruagh*. Its English cognate does not have so wide a range of meanings. Maimonides had discussed the ambiguity of *ruagh* in his *Guide* I, 40.

mind) to you. And in this sense it is used to mean the will, or decision, the
 15 appetite, and the impulse of the heart, as in Ezekiel 1:12, אל אשר יהיה שמה, where there was a Spirit (or a will) to go, they went. Similarly, Isaiah 30:1, רוחי ולא מסכה ולא רוחי for pouring out a libation, but not of my Spirit.³¹
 And in Isaiah 29:10, כי נסך עליהם יהוה רוח תרדמה, because God has poured out upon
 20 them³² the Spirit (i.e., the appetite) of sleeping. And in Judges 8:3, אז רפתה רוחם, then their Spirit (or impulse) was softened. Similarly in Proverbs 16:32, עיר
 who rules his Spirit (or appetite) [is better] than he who takes a city. Similarly in Proverbs 25:28, איש אין מעצור לרוחו, a man who
 does not restrain his Spirit. And Isaiah 33:11, רוחכם אש תאכלכם, your Spirit is a
 25 fire, which consumes you.

[28] Next, this term רוח, *ruagh*, insofar as it means heart, serves to
 express all the passions of the heart, and even its endowments, as רוח
 גבוהה a lofty Spirit, to mean pride; רוח שפלה a lowly Spirit, to mean humil-
 ity; רוח רעה a bad Spirit, to mean hate and melancholy; רוח טובה a good
 30 Spirit, to mean kindness; רוח קנאה a Spirit of jealousy; רוח זנונים a Spirit (or
 appetite) of fornications; רוח חכמה עצה גבורה a Spirit of wisdom, counsel and
 strength, i.e., (for in Hebrew we use substantives more frequently than
 adjectives), a wise, prudent and strong mind, or the virtue of wisdom,
 counsel and strength; רוח חן a Spirit of benevolence, etc.

[III/23] 6. It means the mind itself or soul, as in Ecclesiastes 3:19: ורוח אחד לכל the Spirit
 (or soul) is the same in all,³³ and והרוח תשוב אל האלהים the Spirit returns to God.³⁴

7. Finally, it means the regions of the world (on account of the winds which
 blow from them), and also the sides of each thing, which face those regions
 5 of the world. See Ezekiel 37:9, and 42:16, 17, 18, 19, etc.

[29] It should be noted now that a thing is related to God, and is
 said to be of God,

31. Spinoza's translation here is more literal than is common in more recent versions. The pouring of a libation was a common ceremony at the conclusion of alliances. Hence, the NRSV translation has "who make an alliance, but against my will."

32. Spinoza's Hebrew text reads עליהם upon them, whereas the Masoretic text, which is the basis for most translations, reads עליכם upon you (pl.).

33. I.e. (as the biblical context makes clear): men and animals share the same fate, death. The fundamental similarity between humans and other animals was also a theme in Uriel da Costa's denial of immortality. Cf. Gebhardt 1922, 66; Osier 1983, 102.

34. Spinoza does not identify the passage from which this quotation comes (Eccles. 12:7), but it, along with Eccles. 3:19, was prominent in the debates about immortality. In Manasseh 1842/1972 (II, 312–15) Manasseh ben Israel had also juxtaposed these two verses, taking 12:7 to be a proof of the immortality of the soul, and 3:19 to be an "apparently contradictory" verse which required explanation. These are passages we would expect to have been of particular interest to the young Spinoza at the time of his departure from the synagogue, given what Lucas and Revah tell us about his religious doubts (Lucas 1927, 45–46; Revah 1959, 18, 36). See also x, 45; Nadler 2001; and Kaplan 1989.

CHAPTER I: PROPHECY

1. because it pertains to God's nature, and is, as it were, a part of God, as when one says כח יהוה *God's power*, עיני יהוה *God's eyes*;
- 10 2. because it is in God's 'power, and acts from God's command, as in the sacred texts the heavens are called שמי יהוה *the heavens of God*, because they are the chariot and the dwelling place of God, Assyria is called the whip of God, and Nebuchadnezzar, the servant of God, etc.;
3. because it is dedicated to God, היכל יהוה *temple of God*, נזיר אלהים *Nazarite of God*, לחם יהוה *bread of God*, etc.
4. because it is imparted through the Prophets, but not revealed through the
- 15 natural light; for that reason, the Law of Moses is called the Law of God.
5. to express the thing in a superlative degree, הררי אל *mountains of God*, i.e., very high mountains, תרדמת יהוה *a sleep of God*, i.e., a very deep sleep; it is in this sense that Amos 4:11 is to be explained, when God himself speaks
- 20 thus: הפכתי אתכם כמהפכת אלהים את סדום ואת עמורה *I have destroyed you, as God's destruction (destroyed) Sodom and Gomorrah*, i.e., as I did in that memorable destruction; for when God himself speaks, it cannot properly be explained otherwise. Even Solomon's natural 'knowledge is called God's 'knowledge, i.e., 'knowledge which is divine or beyond common 'knowledge.³⁵ Also, in the Psalms, [certain trees] are called ארזי אל *cedars of God*, to express their
- 25 unusual size. And in 1 Samuel 11:7, to refer to a very great fear, it is said ויפל פחד יהוה על העם *and the fear of God fell upon the people*.

[30] And in this sense, the Jews used to refer to God everything which surpassed their power of understanding, and whose natural causes they did not then know.³⁶ So, a storm was called גערת יהוה *God's rebuke*, and thunder and lightning were called God's arrows. For they thought that God kept the winds shut up in caves, which they called God's treasures. Their difference from the Pagans was just that they believed it was God, not Aeolus, who was the ruler of the winds.

That's also why they called miracles works of God, i.e., works to be [III/24] astonished at. For of course, all natural things are God's works, and exist and act only through the divine power. It's in this sense that the Psalmist calls the miracles of Egypt God's powers, because in a situation of extreme danger they opened up the way to deliverance for the Hebrews, who were expecting nothing like them, and hence were amazed by them.

- 5 [31] So when unusual works of nature are called works of God, and trees of unusual size are called trees of God, it is no wonder that in Genesis the strongest men, and those of great stature, are called sons

35. Referring, perhaps, to 1 Kings 3:28.

36. Earlier, in §8, Spinoza's view seemed to be that it was characteristic of the Jews to refer *everything* to God, even those common things whose natural causes they knew.

of God, even though they are immoral robbers and libertines.³⁷ Hence,
 10 the ancients—not only the Jews, but even the Pagans—used to refer to
 God absolutely everything in which one man surpassed the others. For
 when the Pharaoh heard Joseph's interpretation of his dream, he said
 that the mind of the Gods³⁸ was in him; and again, Nebuchadnezzar
 said to Daniel that he had the mind of the Holy Gods.³⁹ Furthermore,
 nothing is more frequent among the Latins. For they say that things
 which have been made ingeniously have been fashioned by a divine
 15 hand. If anyone wished to translate this into Hebrew, he would have
 to say *fashioned by the hand of God*, as Hebraists well know.

[32] From these observations, we can easily understand and explain
 those Passages in Scripture which mention the Spirit of God. In cer-
 tain places רוח אלהים, *the Spirit of God*, and רוח יהוה, *the Spirit of Yabweh*,
 20 mean nothing other than a wind which is very violent, very dry and
 destructive, as in Isaiah 40:7, רוח יהוה נושבה בו, *the wind of Yabweh blew*
on it, i.e., a very dry and destructive wind. Similarly in Genesis 1:2,
and a wind of God (or a very strong wind) was moving over the water.

[33] Next, [*ruagh Elohim* or *ruagh Yabweh*] means a great heart. For
 25 the Sacred Texts call Gideon's heart, and Samson's, רוח יהוה, the Spirit
 of God, i.e., a very daring heart, ready for anything.⁴⁰ Similarly, any
 extraordinary virtue or force is called רוח יהוה, *the Spirit* or *virtue of God*,
 as in Exodus 31:3, ואמלא אותו רוח אלהים, *and I shall fill him* (viz., Bezalel)
with the Spirit of God, i.e., as Scripture itself explains, with understanding
 30 and skill beyond the ordinary lot of men. So in Isaiah 11:2, ונחה עליו רוח
 יהוה, *and the Spirit of God shall rest upon him*, i.e., as the Prophet himself
 declares, explaining it afterward in detail (in a manner very commonly
 used in the Sacred Texts): the virtues of wisdom, counsel, strength, etc.
 So also Saul's melancholy is called רוח אלהים רעה, *an evil Spirit of God*, i.e.,
 [III/25] a very deep melancholy.⁴¹ For Saul's servants, who called his melancholy

37. Probably a reference to Gen. 6:2, "the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives, whomsoever they chose." Nachmanides, whose interpretation Spinoza perhaps follows, took this to mean that they took their wives by force, even from among those who were already married to others.

38. *mentem deorum*. A reference to Gen. 41:38, where the Hebrew is רוח אלהים *ruagh Elohim*, usually translated "spirit of God." Though plural in form, אלהים (*Elohim*), is often treated as a singular term. But since Spinoza emphasizes that the Pharaoh was a pagan, he presumably did not want to make him sound like a monotheist.

39. A reference to Dan. 4:8–9. The Hebrew is *ruagh Elohim*, but in this case biblical translators typically treat *Elohim* as plural.

40. For example, in Judg. 6:34; 14:6, 19; 15:14 (ALM).

41. The reference is to 1 Sam. 18:10. Modern commentators are apt to see Saul as suffering from some form of mental illness, perhaps manic depression. Cf. Anchor Samuel I, 280–81. In antiquity such illnesses were regularly attributed to the agency of evil spirits. SC observes here that "to the Hebraic mind there was no power of evil independent of

a melancholy of God, urged him to call a musician to him, who would revive his spirits by playing the lyre. This shows that by a *melancholy of God* they understood a natural melancholy.

- 5 [34] Next, רוח יהוה, *the Spirit of God*, means the mind itself of man, as in Job 27:3, ורוח אלה באפי *and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils*, alluding to what is said in Genesis [2:7], that God breathed the breath of life into the nostrils of man. So Ezekiel, prophesying to the dead, says (37:14), ונתתי רוحي בכם וחייתם *and I shall give my Spirit to you and you shall live*, i.e.,
 10 I shall restore life to you. And in this sense it is said in Job 34:14, אם ישם אליו לבו רוחו ונשמתו אליו יאסוף *if he (viz., God) wishes, he will gather his Spirit* (i.e., the mind which he gave us) *and his breath back to himself*. We must understand Genesis 6:3 in the same way: לא ידון רוحي באדם לעולם *my Spirit shall not reason* (or shall not decide) *in man for ever, since he is flesh*, i.e., after this man shall act from the decisions of the flesh, and not those of the mind, which I gave him to discern the good. So also Psalm 51:12–13 [= KJV, RSV 10–11]: לב טהור ברא לי אלהים : אל תשליכני מלפניך ורוח קדשך אל תקח ממני
 20 *heart in me, O God, and renew in me an appropriate (or moderate) Spirit* (i.e., appetite); *do not cast me away from your sight, nor take the mind of your holiness away from me*. Because sins were believed to arise only from the flesh—the mind recommending only the good—[the Psalmist] asks for God's aid against the appetite of the flesh, but prays only that the
 25 mind the Holy God gave him be preserved by God.

[35] Now, because the common people are weak, Scripture usually depicts God as being like a man, and attributes to God a mind, a heart, affects of the heart—even a body and breath. As a result, the Sacred Texts often use רוח יהוה *the Spirit of God*, for the mind, i.e., the heart,
 30 affect, force, and breath of the mouth, of God. So Isaiah 40:13 says: *who has directed the Spirit (or mind) of God?* i.e., who, besides God himself, has determined God's mind to will something? And in Isaiah 63:10, והמה מרו ועצבו את רוח קדשו *and they affected the Spirit of his holiness with bitterness and sadness*.

- [36] That's how it happens that [the phrase רוח יהוה] is customarily used for the Law of Moses, because it explains, as it were, the mind of
 [III/26] God—as Isaiah himself says (in 63:11): *where is he who put the Spirit of his holiness in the midst of them?*, i.e., the Law of Moses. This is clear from the whole context of the utterance. Similarly in Nehemiah 9:20, ורוחך הטובה נתת להשכילם *and you have given them*
 5 *your good Spirit, or mind, to make them understand*. For he is speaking of

and opposed to God. Good and evil equally were in the power of God, and therefore the spirit which afflicted Saul is described as sent by Him.”

the time of the Law, and he alludes also to Deuteronomy 4:6, where Moses says: *since it* (viz. the Law) *is your 'knowledge and wisdom, etc. So also in Psalms 143:10, טובה תנחני בארץ משור, your good mind will lead me into a level land, i.e., your mind, revealed to us, will lead me into*
 10 *the right path.*

[37] The Spirit of God also means, as we have said, God's breath, which is also improperly attributed to God in Scripture, just as a mind, heart, and a body are.⁴² See, for example, Psalm 33:6.

Next, [the Spirit of God also means] God's power, force, or virtue, as in Job 33:4, רוח אל עשתי *the Spirit of God made me*, i.e., the virtue,
 15 *or power of God, or, if you prefer, God's decree. For the Psalmist, speaking poetically, also says [in Psalms 33:6] by the command of God were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the Spirit, or breath, of his mouth, i.e., by his decree, pronounced as if in one breath. Similarly, in Psalms 139:7, ואנה מפניך אברה, where shall I go (that I*
 20 *may be) outside your Spirit, or where shall I flee (that I may be) out of your sight. That is (as is evident from the verses in which the Psalmist himself proceeds to amplify this), where can I go that I may be outside your power and presence?*

[38] Finally, the Sacred Texts also use רוח יהוה *the Spirit of God* to express God's affects of the heart, such as his kindness and compassion,
 25 *as in Micah 2:7, הקצר רוח יהוה is the Spirit of God, i.e., God's compassion, restricted? are these (cruel) works his? Similarly, in Zechariah 4:6, לא בחיל, not by arms, not by force, but only by my Spirit, i.e., only by my compassion. And in this sense I think we must understand*
 30 *the same Prophet's 7:12, שמו שמיר משמנו את התורה ואת הדברים אשר, and they made their hearts hard,⁴³ lest they should obey the Law and the commandments which God sent from his Spirit (i.e., from his compassion) through the first Prophets. In this sense also Haggai says (2:5): ורוחי עומדת בתוכם אל תיראו and my Spirit (or my grace) remains among you; fear not.*

[III/27] [39] As for Isaiah 48:16, where it is said יהוה אלהים שלחני ורוחו *but now the LORD God sent me, and his Spirit*, we can understand this to refer either to God's heart, and compassion, or to his mind, revealed in the Law. For Isaiah says: *from the beginning* (i.e., when I first came to you,
 5 *to preach God's anger to you, and his judgment against you), I have not spoken in secret, from the time [his judgment] was (pronounced), I was there (as he himself attests in ch. 7), but now I am a joyful messenger,*

42. Note that Spinoza here treats even attributing a mind to God as a form of anthropomorphism. Bennett observes that though few theologians would credit God with having breath or a body, "most would say God has or is a mind."

43. Following Akkerman, who reads *cautem* for *cautum*.

sent by God's compassion, to sing your restoration. Alternatively, as I have said, we can also understand [God's Spirit] to refer to God's mind, revealed in the Law, i.e., that he comes now to warn them, according to the command of the Law, viz. Leviticus 19:17. So he warns them in the same conditions and in the same way as Moses used to. And finally, as Moses also did, he ends by preaching their restoration. Nevertheless, the first explanation seems to me more harmonious.

[40] Let us come back, finally, to the point we have been aiming at. From all these [examples] these phrases of Scripture become clear: *the Spirit of God was in the Prophet, God infused his Spirit into men, men were filled with the Spirit of God, and with the Holy Spirit*, etc. For they mean nothing other than that the Prophets had a singular virtue, beyond what is ordinary,^{44**} that they cultivated piety with exceptional constancy of heart, and that they perceived God's mind, *or*, judgment. [41] For we have shown that in Hebrew Spirit means both the mind and its judgment, and that for this reason the Law itself, because it made known God's mind, could also be called God's Spirit *or* mind. [42] That's why the imagination of the Prophets could, with equal right, also be called the mind of God, insofar as God's decrees were revealed through it, and the Prophets could be said to have had the mind of God. And although the mind of God and his eternal judgments are inscribed in our minds also, and consequently, we too perceive the mind of God (if I may speak with Scripture), nevertheless, because natural knowledge is common to all, men do not value it so highly, as we have already said.⁴⁵ This is particularly true of the Hebrews, who used to boast that they were superior to all others, indeed, who were accustomed to disdain all others, and hence, to disdain the 'knowledge common to all.

[42] Finally, the Prophets were said to have the Spirit of God because men were ignorant of the causes of Prophetic knowledge, were amazed by it, and on that account, were accustomed to refer it to God—as they [III/28] did all other wonders—and to call it God's knowledge.

44. **[ADN. III] Although certain men have certain things nature does not impart to others, nevertheless, they are not said to exceed human nature unless the things they have in this singular way are such that they cannot be perceived from the definition of human nature. E.g., the size of a giant is rare, but nevertheless human. To compose poems extemporaneously is given to very few, and nevertheless, it is human [Saint-Glaine: and some do it easily]. Similarly, some may, with their eyes open, imagine certain things so vividly that it's as if they had those things before them. But if there were someone who had another means of perceiving, and other foundations of knowledge, he would surely transcend the limits of human nature.

45. A reference to i, 2.

[43] We can now affirm, then, without any reservation, that the Prophets perceived God's revelations only with the aid of the imagination, i.e., by the mediation of words or of images; these [words and
5 images] may have been either true or imaginary.⁴⁶ For since we find no other means in Scripture except these, we're not permitted to feign any others, as we have already shown.

[44] By what laws of nature was this [revelation] made? I confess I don't know. I could say, as others do, that it was made by the power of God. But then it would look as though I was just babbling. That
10 would be like trying to explain the form of a singular thing by some transcendental term. For all things are made through the power of God. Indeed, because the power of Nature is just God's power itself,⁴⁷ insofar as we're ignorant of natural causes, we certainly don't understand God's power. So it's foolish to fall back on that power of God
15 when we don't know the natural cause of a thing, i.e., when we don't know God's power itself. But there's no need now for us to know the cause of Prophetic knowledge. For as I've already indicated, here we're just trying to learn what Scripture teaches, so that we can draw our conclusions from those teachings as we would draw conclusions from the data of nature.⁴⁸ We're not in the least concerned with the causes
20 of the teachings.

[45] Since the Prophets perceived God's revelations with the aid of the imagination, there is no doubt that they were able to perceive many things beyond the limits of the intellect. For we can compose many more ideas from words and images than we can by using only
25 the principles and notions on which our whole natural knowledge is constructed.

[46] So now it's clear why the Prophets perceived and taught almost everything in metaphors and enigmatic sayings, and expressed all spiritual things corporeally. For all these things agree more with the nature of the imagination. And now we won't wonder why Scripture and the
30 Prophets speak so improperly and obscurely concerning the Spirit of God, *or* his mind, as in Numbers 11:17 and 1 Kings 22:2,⁴⁹ or why Micaiah saw God sitting [on a throne, in 1 Kings 22:19], while Daniel

46. Cf. i, 9, and the annotation there.

47. A recurring and important theme in the TTP. Cf. iii, 9; vi, 9; and xvi, 3. ALM trace it to a passage in Pliny, *Natural History* II, v, 7. See also TP ii, 2.

48. Here Spinoza anticipates the fuller statement of his methodology which he will make in vii, 6–7.

49. So Gebhardt, ALM, and Glazemaker (among others) give the citation. But it's hard to see why 1 Kings 22:2 would be apt. ALM's annotation suggests (more plausibly) that Spinoza may have intended to refer to 1 Kings 22:20–23, where God is said to put a lying spirit into the mouths of Ahab's prophets (a passage Spinoza will cite in ii, 7–9).

saw him as an old man clothed in white garments [Daniel 7:9], and Ezekiel saw him as a fire;⁵⁰ or why those who were with Christ saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove,⁵¹ but the Apostles saw it as fiery
[III/29] tongues [Acts 2:3], and finally why Paul, when he was first converted, saw a great light [Acts 9:3]. For all these [visions] agree completely with the common ways of imagining God and Spirits.

[47] Finally, since the imagination is random and inconstant, [we also understand now why] Prophecy did not stay long with the Prophets, and also was not frequent, but very rare. I.e., it happened to very few
5 men, and even to them, very rarely.

[48] As a result, we're now forced to ask how the Prophets could have come to be certain of things they perceived only through the imagination, and not from certain principles of the mind.⁵² But whatever we can say about this, we must seek from Scripture. As we have already said, we do not have true 'knowledge of this matter, *or* we cannot
10 explain it through its first causes. What Scripture teaches concerning the certainty of the Prophets, I shall show in the following chapter, where I have decided to treat of the Prophets.

[III/29]

CHAPTER II

Of the Prophets

[1] From the preceding chapter it follows (as we've already indicated) that the Prophets were not endowed with a more perfect mind, but rather with a power of imagining unusually vividly. The Scriptural narratives also teach this amply. It's clear that Solomon excelled all others in
20 wisdom, but not in the gift of Prophecy. Similarly, those outstandingly wise men, Heman, Darda, and Calcol, were not Prophets. On the other hand, countryfolk, without any education, and even simple women, like Hagar, Abraham's handmaid, were granted the gift of Prophecy.¹ This

50. Cf. Ezek. 1:4. SC notes (regarding Ezekiel, xii) that Ezekiel's description of his vision in his first chapter provided a focal point for Jewish mysticism, "from its beginning down to the later study of the Kabbalah." See Maimonides *Guide* III, introduction through ch. vii.

51. In John 1:32 this vision is attributed to John the Baptist, but in Matt. 3:16, to Jesus himself.

52. Note that the doubt Spinoza raises here tends to undermine the chapter's starting point, which had defined prophecy as certain knowledge (i, 1).

1. Spinoza now makes his opposition to Maimonides more explicit. Cf. i, 9, and the annotation there. In 1 Kings 4:31 Solomon is said to have been wiser than all

25 also agrees with both experience and reason. For those who have the most powerful imaginations are less able to grasp things by pure intellect. On the other hand, those who have more powerful intellects, and who cultivate them most, have a more moderate power of imagining, and have it more under their 'power. They rein in their imagination, as it were, lest it be confused with the intellect.

[2] So those who eagerly search the Prophetic books for wisdom, and
 30 knowledge of both natural and spiritual matters, go completely astray. Since the times, Philosophy and, finally, the subject itself demand it, I have decided to show this fully here. I care little for the snarls of
 [III/30] the superstitious, who hate no one more than those who cultivate true 'knowledge and true life. Sadly, things have come to this: people who openly confess that they have no idea of God, and that they know God only through created things (whose causes they are ignorant of), do not blush to accuse Philosophers of Atheism.²

5 [3] To show, in an orderly way, [that the books of the Prophets are not a source of wisdom and the knowledge of spiritual and natural matters], I shall show that the Prophecies varied, not only with the imagination and bodily temperament of each Prophet, but also with the opinions they were steeped in. So Prophecy never made the Prophets more learned. Soon I shall explain this more fully; but first I must treat
 10 the certainty of the Prophets, both because it concerns the theme of this chapter, but also because it will help in some measure to get to the conclusion we intend to demonstrate.

[4] Unlike a clear and distinct idea, a simple imagination does not, by its nature, involve certainty. So to be able to be certain of things we
 15 imagine, we must add something to the imagination—viz., reasoning.³ It follows that, by itself, Prophecy cannot involve certainty. As we've

other men (including Heman, Darda, and Kalchol). One matter of dispute is whether Hagar was really a prophet. Maimonides denied it (*Guide* II, 42). But though the two versions of the story of her expulsion (in Gen. 16:1–16 and 21:8–21) differ in numerous details, both agree that an angel spoke to her and revealed that her offspring would flourish.

2. Spinoza may have in mind the controversies over the Cartesian philosophy at Utrecht and Leiden in the 1640s, where Descartes was accused of atheism, partly because he rejected the traditional arguments for God's existence, and sought to prove God's existence from our idea of God, an idea the critics thought we could not have. On this see Verbeek 1992. But the accusation was of course one which Spinoza himself had to face. Cf. Letter 42, IV/218/32–34.

3. What reasoning must be added, if an imagination is to become certain? The *Treatise on the Intellect* suggests that it is an understanding of the nature of the imagination and the laws of nature involved in causing us to perceive things the way we do. Cf. TdIE, 102–3; TTP i, 44, 48 and v, 35; and Curley 1973. The signs which Spinoza says the prophets had would not provide that understanding, and so would not yield more than a subjective feeling of certainty, not objective certainty.

shown, it depended only on the imagination. So the Prophets were not certain about God's revelation by the revelation itself, but by some sign.

20 Genesis 15:8—where Abraham asked for a sign after he had heard God's promise—makes this evident. He trusted God, of course, and did not ask for a sign so as to have faith in God. He asked for a sign to know that it was God who had made this promise to him.

[5] Judges 6:17 establishes the same point even more clearly. There Gideon says to God, *ועשית לי אות שאתה מדבר עמי make a sign for me* (that I may know) *that you are speaking with me*. Also [in Exodus 3:12] God says to Moses, *וזה לך האות כי אנכי שלחתיך and (let) this (be) a sign to you, that I sent you*. And Hezekiah, who had known for some time that Isaiah was a Prophet, asked for a sign of the Prophecy predicting his [return to] health [Isaiah 38:1–8]. This shows that the Prophets
30 always had some sign by which they became certain of the things they imagined Prophetically. That's why Moses warns [the Jews] to seek a sign from [anyone claiming to be] a Prophet, viz. the outcome of some future event (Deuteronomy 18:22). [6] In this respect, then, Prophecy is inferior to natural knowledge, which needs no sign, but of its own nature involves certainty.

Indeed, this Prophetic certainty was not mathematical, but only
[III/31] moral, as is evident from Scripture itself. For in Deuteronomy 13[:2] Moses warns that any Prophet who wants to teach new Gods should be condemned to death, even though he confirms his teaching with signs and miracles. For as Moses himself goes on to say, God also uses
5 signs and miracles to test the people. [7] And Christ too gave this same warning to his Disciples, as Matthew 24:24 shows.⁴ In fact, Ezekiel clearly teaches (14:9) that God sometimes deceives men with false revelations.⁵ For he says, *והנביא כי יפותה ודבר דבר אני יהיה פתיתי את הנביא ההוא and when a Prophet (i.e., a false one) is led astray and has spoken a word,*
10 *it is I, God, who have led that Prophet astray*. Micaiah also testifies to this concerning the Prophets of Ahab (see 1 Kings 22:23).

[8] Although this seems to show that Prophecy and revelation are very doubtful, still, they do, as we have said, have a great deal of certainty.
15 For God never deceives the pious and the elect, but as that ancient proverb says,⁶ and as the story of Abigail and her speech show, God

4. In the passage cited Jesus warns that false messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, "to lead astray, if possible, even the elect."

5. Cf. Descartes, the Second and Sixth Replies (AT 1974–86, VII, 125–26, 142–44, 415–16, 428–31).

6. Spinoza refers, without quoting it, to a proverb cited in 1 Sam. 24:13: "Out of the wicked comes forth wickedness, but my hand shall not be against you." Abigail's speech is in 1 Sam. 25:24–31.

uses the pious as instruments of his piety, and the impious as executors
 20 and means of his anger. [9] The case of Micaiah, which we have just
 cited, also establishes this most clearly. For although God had decided
 to deceive Ahab through Prophets, nevertheless he used only false
 Prophets. To the pious [Prophet] he revealed the thing as it was, and
 he did not prohibit him from predicting the truth.⁷

Nevertheless, as I have said, the Prophet's certainty was only moral,
 because no one can justify himself before God, or boast that he is the
 25 instrument of God's piety. Scripture teaches this, and the thing itself
 is plain. For God's anger seduced David into numbering the people,
 though Scripture testifies abundantly to his piety.⁸

[10] The whole of Prophetic certainty, therefore, is founded on
 these three things:

- 1) That the Prophets imagined the things revealed to them very vividly, in
 the way we are usually affected by objects when we are awake;
- 30 2) That there was a Sign;
- 3) And finally—this is the chief thing—that they had a heart inclined only
 to the right and the good.

And although Scripture does not always mention a Sign, still, we
 must believe that the Prophets always had a Sign. For as many have
 previously noted, Scripture is not in the habit of always narrating all
 the conditions and circumstances; instead, it sometimes presupposes
 that they are known.

[III/32] [11] Furthermore, we can concede that the Prophets who prophesied
 nothing new, but only what was contained in the Law of Moses, did
 not need a sign, because they were confirmed by the Law. E.g., the

7. First Micaiah prophesies success, but then, under pressure from Ahab to tell the truth, he prophesies failure. Cf. 1 Kings 22:13–18, 2 Chron. 18:12–17.

8. Spinoza is referring, in the first instance, to 2 Sam. 24:1, according to which God, in his anger against the people of Israel, incited David to count them. It is unclear why numbering the people was a sin. Manasseh 1842/1972, I, 194–98, canvasses several theories, among them the theory that in failing to count the people by collecting half a shekel from each man (cf. Exod. 30:12–13), David risked bringing the Evil Eye upon them. Manasseh accepts the reality of the Evil Eye, but does not think David's failure to follow Exodus's prescription explained why his act was sinful.

In any event, David acknowledged having sinned greatly, and the people of Israel were accordingly punished with a pestilence in which seventy thousand people died. Discomfort about this passage seems to go back to biblical times. 1 Chron. 21:1 makes Satan the one who incited David's sin (perhaps, as HCSB suggests, because the Chronicler is reluctant to make God the author of a sin he proceeds to punish).

David's piety is attested in 1 Kings 14:8, 15:5, and 11, though 15:5 takes notice of his (many) shortcomings. Manasseh 1842/1972, II, 63–65, provides an interesting account of the medieval debates about David's character.

CHAPTER II: PROPHETS

Prophecy of Jeremiah concerning the destruction of Jerusalem was confirmed by the Prophecies of the rest of the prophets, and by the threats of the Law. So it did not need a sign. But Hananiah, contrary
5 to all the Prophets, prophesied a speedy restoration of the city. So he needed a sign. Without one he would have had to doubt his Prophecy until the occurrence of the thing he predicted confirmed his Prophecy. See Jeremiah 28:9.⁹

10 [12] Because the certainty the Prophets had from signs was not mathematical—i.e., a certainty which follows from the necessity of the perception of the thing perceived or seen—but only moral, and the signs were given only to persuade the Prophet, it follows that the signs were given according to the opinions and capacity of the Prophet. So a sign
15 which would render one Prophet certain of his Prophecy could not at all convince another, who was steeped in different opinions. That's why the signs varied in each Prophet.

[13] Similarly, the revelation itself varied in each Prophet, as we have said [ii, 3], according to the disposition of his bodily temperament, according to the disposition of his imagination, and according to the
20 opinions he had previously embraced.

First, the revelation varied according to his temperament in this way: if the Prophet was cheerful, what was revealed to him were victories, peace, and the things which move men to joy; for such men usually imagine these things more frequently. On the other hand, if the Prophet
was sad, wars, punishments, and all kinds of evil were revealed to him.

25 And as the Prophet was compassionate, calm, prone to anger, severe, etc., he was more ready for one kind of revelation than for another.¹⁰

[14] Secondly, the revelation varied according to the disposition of his imagination: if the Prophet was refined, he perceived the mind of God in a refined style; if he was confused, he perceived it confusedly. It varied
similarly in the revelations represented through images. If the Prophet
30 was a rustic, bulls, cows, and the like, were represented to him; if he was a soldier, generals and armies; if he was a courtier, the royal throne and things of that kind.¹¹

[15] Finally, Prophecy varied according to differences in the opinions of the Prophets. To the Magi, who believed in the trifles of astrology, Christ's birth was revealed through the imagination of a star rising
[III/33] in the east (see Matthew 2). To Nebuchadnezzar's soothsayers the

9. Jeremiah's point, however, seems to be somewhat different from the one Spinoza suggests, viz. that the prophet who prophesies an outcome his hearers desire can be known to be a prophet only after his predictions have been realized.

10. This point is developed further in ii, 16–18.

11. This point is developed further in ii, 19–23.

destruction of Jerusalem was revealed in the entrails of animals (see Ezekiel 21:26).¹² That King also understood this from oracles and from the direction of arrows he hurled up in the air. Again, to Prophets who
 5 believed that men act from free choice and from their own power, God was revealed as indifferent, and as unaware of future human actions. We shall demonstrate all these things separately from Scripture itself.¹³

[16] The case of Elisha (in 2 Kings 3:15) establishes the first point. He asked for an instrument to prophesy to Jehoram; he could not perceive
 10 God's mind until its music had charmed him.¹⁴ Then, finally, he predicted joyful things to Jehoram and his companions. This couldn't happen earlier, because he was angry with the King—those who are angry with someone are ready to imagine evils, but not goods, concerning them.

[17] Some say that God is not revealed to those who are angry or sad.¹⁵
 15 They are surely dreaming. For God revealed that wretched slaughter of the first-born to Moses when he was angry at Pharaoh (see Exodus 11:8), without using any musical instrument to do it. Again, God was revealed to Cain when he was in a rage [Genesis 4:6], and the wretchedness and stubbornness of the Jews were revealed to Ezekiel when he was angry and impatient (see Ezekiel 3:14). Jeremiah prophesied the
 20 Jews' calamities when he was very mournful and weary of life. That's why Josiah did not want to consult him, but instead asked a woman of that time, expecting, from the female mentality, that she would be more ready to reveal God's mercy to him (see 2 Chronicles 34[:22–28]).¹⁶

[18] Also, Micaiah never prophesied anything good to Ahab, though
 25 other true Prophets did (as is evident from 1 Kings 20[:13]). But his whole life he prophesied evils (see 1 Kings 22:8, and more clearly, 2 Chronicles 18:7). The Prophets, therefore, were more ready for one kind of revelation than another, according to the variations in their bodily temperament.

[19] As for the second point, the style of the prophecy varied according to the articulateness of each Prophet. For unlike the Prophecies
 30 of Isaiah and Nahum, those of Ezekiel and Amos are written, not in a refined, but in a more unsophisticated style.¹⁷ And if anyone who is

12. In some translations (e.g., the NRSV) the relevant passage appears in verse 21:21. In others (e.g., the NJPS translation) it's in verse 26.

13. Since Spinoza regards this point as especially important, he devotes several pages to arguing for it, beginning in ii, 24, and extending to ii, 52.

14. HCSB cites 1 Sam. 10:5–6 to show that "Prophets sometimes used music to induce trance or possession by God's spirit."

15. Cf. Maimonides *Guide* II, xxxvi, which cites the Talmud (Shabbath 30b) in favor of this position.

16. Spinoza's explanation of Josiah's consultation of Huldah may have been suggested by that offered in the Talmud (Meg. 14b).

17. A point acknowledged in Calvin, *Institutes* I, viii, 2 (Gebhardt V, 16).

skilled in the Hebrew language wants to examine these matters more carefully, let him compare certain chapters of the different Prophets with one another when they are dealing with the same subject; he will find a great difference in style.

Let him compare, for example, ch. 1 of the courtier, Isaiah, from vs. [III/34] 11 to vs. 20, with ch. 5 of the rustic Amos, from vs. 21 to vs. 24. Let him compare, next, the order and reasons of the Prophecy of Jeremiah which he wrote against Edom in ch. 49 [vv. 7–22] with the order and reasons of Obadiah [vv. 1–16]. Let him compare also Isaiah 40:19–20 5 and 44:8ff. with Hosea 8:6 and 13:2. And similarly with the others. If you weigh all these things rightly, you will easily see that God has no distinctive style of speaking, but that he is refined, succinct, and severe, unsophisticated, wordy, and obscure, according to the learning and capacity of the Prophet.

10 [20] Even when the Prophetic representations and symbols signified the same thing, they still varied. For to Isaiah the glory of God leaving the temple was represented differently than it was to Ezekiel [cf. Isaiah 6 with Ezekiel 1]. The Rabbis maintain that each representation was entirely the same, but that Ezekiel, being a rustic, was struck beyond measure with wonder, and therefore described it fully, with all the 15 circumstances.¹⁸ Nevertheless, if they didn't have a certain tradition in support of this—which I don't for a moment believe—they are making the whole thing up. For Isaiah saw Seraphim with six wings, while Ezekiel saw beasts with four wings. Isaiah saw God clothed and sitting on a royal throne, while Ezekiel saw him as like a fire. There is no doubt that each of them saw God as he was accustomed to imagine him.

20 [21] Moreover, the representations varied not only in their manner, but also in their clarity. For Zechariah's representations were too obscure for him to understand them without explanation, as is evident from his account of them [Zechariah 1:9]. And even after Daniel's representations had been explained to him, the Prophet himself could 25 not understand them [Daniel 8:15–27]. This did not happen because of the difficulty of what was to be revealed—for it was only a matter of human affairs, which do not exceed the limits of human capacity, except insofar as they are future—but only because Daniel's imagination did not have the same aptitude for prophesying while he was awake as it had while he was dreaming. This is evident from the fact 30 that at the very beginning of the revelation he was so terrified that he almost despaired of his powers. So because of the weakness of his

18. Spinoza refers here to a passage in the Talmud (Hagigah 13b), discussed (but not unequivocally endorsed) by Maimonides *Guide* III, 6.

imagination and of his powers, the things represented to him were very obscure, and he could not understand them even after they had been explained to him.

[22] Here it should be noted that the words Daniel heard (as we have shown above)¹⁹ were only imaginary. So it is no wonder that, being upset
[III/35] at that time, he imagined all those words so confusedly and obscurely that afterward he could not understand anything from them. Some say that God did not want to reveal the thing clearly to Daniel. But they seem not to have read the words of the Angel, who says expressly (see
5 10:14) *that he came to make Daniel understand what would happen to his people in the end of days*. So these things remained obscure because at that time no one was found who had enough power of imagination that they could be revealed to him more clearly.

[23] Finally, the Prophets to whom it was revealed that God would take Elijah up [into heaven] wanted to persuade Elisha that he had
10 been brought down in another place, where they could still find him [2 Kings 2:16]. This clearly shows that they had not understood God's revelation properly.

There is no need to show these things more fully. For nothing is more clearly established in Scripture than that God endowed some Prophets with far more grace for prophesying than he did others.

[24] [As for the third point] I shall now show more carefully and in greater detail—for I think the matter is of great importance—that
15 the Prophecies *or* representations also varied according to the opinions the Prophets embraced, and that the Prophets had various, and indeed, contrary, opinions, as well as various prejudices. (I'm speaking here only about purely speculative matters, for we must think quite differently about matters which concern integrity and morals.) From
20 these propositions I shall conclude that Prophecy never rendered the Prophets more learned, but left them with their preconceived opinions, that for that reason we are not at all bound to believe them concerning purely speculative matters.

[25] With astonishing rashness everyone has persuaded himself that the Prophets knew everything the human intellect can attain to. And although certain passages of Scripture indicate to us as clearly as possible that the Prophets were ignorant of certain things, they prefer to
25 say that they do not understand Scripture in those passages, rather than concede that the Prophets were ignorant of anything. Or else they try to twist the words of Scripture so that it says what it plainly does not

19. See i, 10–22, where Spinoza argues that only when God communicated the law to Moses did he use a true voice.

mean. Of course, if either of these [ways of dealing with Scripture] is permissible, the whole of Scripture is undone. If it is permissible to number the clearest passages among those which are obscure and impenetrable, or to interpret them as one pleases, we will strive in vain to show something from Scripture.²⁰

[26] For example, nothing in Scripture is clearer than that Joshua, and perhaps also the author who wrote his story, thought that the sun moves around the earth, that the earth is at rest, and that for some period of time the sun stood still.²¹ Nevertheless, there are many who do not want to concede that there can be any change in the heavens, and who therefore explain this passage so that it doesn't seem to say anything like that. Others, who have learned to philosophize more correctly, since they understand that the earth moves, whereas the sun is at rest, *or* does not move around the earth, strive with all their powers to twist the same [truth] out of Scripture, though it cries out in open protest against this treatment. They truly amaze me!

[27] Are we, I ask, bound to believe that Joshua, a soldier, was skilled in Astronomy? and that the miracle could not be revealed to him, or that the light of the sun could not remain longer than usual above the horizon, unless Joshua understood the cause? Both alternatives seem to me ridiculous. I prefer, then, to say openly that Joshua did not know the true cause of the greater duration of that light, that he and the whole crowd who were present all thought that the sun moves with a daily motion around the earth, and that on that day it stood still for a while. They believed this to be the cause of the greater duration of that light and they did not consider that a refraction greater than usual could arise from the large amount of ice then in that part of the air (see Joshua 10:11)—or from some other cause. We are not now concerned to ask what the true cause was.

[28] Similarly, the sign of the backward motion of the shadow was revealed to Isaiah according to his power of understanding, viz. as a backward motion of the sun [cf. 2 Kings 20:8–12 with Isaiah 38:7–8]. For he too thought that the sun moves and that the earth is at rest. As luck would have it, he never thought of parhelia,²² not even in a dream. We are permitted to maintain this without any hesitation because the

20. The target here is the kind of rationalistic interpretation Spinoza associates with Maimonides. He will return to this critique in vii, 75ff.

21. Cf. Josh. 10:12–14. Note the distinction Spinoza makes between Joshua and the author of the book of Joshua, anticipating a claim he will not argue for until viii, 34–38.

22. A parhelion is a bright spot in the sky caused by the reflection of sunlight on ice crystals in the atmosphere. Descartes offered an explanation of them in the final chapter of his *Météores* (AT 1974–86, VI, 354–66) and Huygens also wrote a treatise on them, *De coronis et parheliis*.

sign could really happen, and be predicted to the king by Isaiah, even though the Prophet did not know its true cause.

25 [29] We must also say the same about Solomon's building the temple (if, indeed, God revealed that to him), viz., that all his measures were revealed to him according to his power of understanding and opinions. Because we are not bound to believe that Solomon was a Mathematician, we are allowed to affirm that he did not know the ratio between the circumference of a circle and its diameter, and that he thought,
30 like ordinary workmen, that it is 3 to 1. But if it's permitted to say that we do not understand that text—1 Kings 7:23—then I certainly don't know what we can understand from Scripture. For the building is narrated there simply and purely historically.

[III/37] [30] If we're allowed to suppose that Scripture thought otherwise, but for some reason unknown to us wished to write in this way, this will completely overturn the whole of Scripture. Everyone will be able, with equal right, to say the same thing about every passage in Scrip-
5 ture. It will be permissible to perpetrate and defend, without harm to the authority of Scripture, whatever absurdity, whatever evil, human malice can think up. But what we've maintained contains no impiety. For though Solomon, Isaiah, Joshua and the rest were Prophets, they were still men, and nothing human should be thought alien to them.²³

[31] It was also according to Noah's power of understanding that it was revealed to him that God was destroying the human race [Genesis
10 6:11–13]. He thought the earth was not inhabited outside of Palestine. There's also no impiety in supposing that the Prophets could be ignorant, not just of things of this kind, but of other more important things. They really were ignorant of these things. For they taught nothing remarkable about the divine attributes, but had quite ordinary opinions about God, to which their revelations were accommodated.

15 I shall now show this by many testimonies from Scripture. From this you will easily see that the Prophets are praised, and so greatly commended, not for the loftiness and excellence of their understanding, but for their piety and constancy of heart.

[32] Adam, the first to whom God was revealed, did not know that
20 God is omnipresent and omniscient. For he hid himself from God [Genesis 3:8] and sought to excuse his sin in God's presence, as if he had a man before him. So God was revealed to him also according to his power of understanding, as one who is not everywhere and who was unaware of Adam's location and sin. For he heard, or he seemed
25 to hear, God walking through the garden, and calling him, and asking

23. Alluding to Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*, 77. Cf. Letter 13, and TTP Pref. 35.

where he was; and when he showed his sense of shame, [he seemed to hear God] asking him whether he had eaten of the forbidden tree.²⁴ So Adam did not know any other attribute of God than that he was the maker of all things.

[33] To Cain also God was revealed according to his power of understanding, i.e., as unaware of human affairs [Genesis 4:9]. For there was no need for him to have a loftier knowledge of God in order to repent of his sin.

To Laban God revealed himself as the God of Abraham, because Laban believed that each nation has its own special God. See Genesis 31:29.

[34] Abraham, too, did not know that God is everywhere and that he foreknows all things. For when he heard the judgment against the [III/38] Sodomites, he begged God not to carry it out before he knew whether they all deserved that punishment. So in Genesis 18:24 he says: *אולי יש העיר* *perhaps fifty just men are found in that city*. And God was not revealed to him differently. For in Abraham's imagination [God] speaks thus: *אורדה נא ואראה הכזעקתה הבאה אלי עשו כלה ואם לא אדעה* *now I shall go down to see whether they have done as the great complaint which has come to me says; if not, I shall know it* [Genesis 18:21]. Also, the divine testimony concerning Abraham (see Genesis 18:19) contains nothing beyond his obedience, and that he recommended the right and the good to his household; it does not say he had lofty thoughts about God.

[35] Even Moses did not perceive clearly enough that God is omniscient and that all human actions are directed by his decree alone. For though God had told him (see Exodus 3:18) that the Israelites would obey him, he still questioned this, and replied (see Exodus 4:1): *והן לא יאמינו לי ולא ישמעו לקולי* *what if they do not believe me and do not obey me?*²⁵ And thus God was revealed to him as indifferent and unaware of future human actions. For he gave him two signs and said (Exodus 4:8): *if it should happen that they do not believe the first sign, still, they will believe the last; but if they do not believe even the last, take (then) some water from the river etc.*

[36] If anyone is willing to assess Moses' opinions carefully and without prejudice, he will find clearly that his opinion of God was that

24. The anthropomorphism of these passages naturally attracted the attention of the classical commentators. Rashi (1960) dealt with the questions God asks in Gen. 3:9 by saying "he knew where [Adam] was, but He asked this in order to open up a conversation with him, that he should not become confused in his reply, if He were to pronounce punishment against him all of a sudden." Similarly for God's questions to Cain at Gen. 4:9 and to Balaam at Num. 22:9. Ibn Ezra 1988 offers the same solution.

25. Spinoza's Hebrew text departs from MT here.

he is a being who exists, has always existed, and always will exist. For this reason he calls him by the name יהוה *Yahweh*, which in Hebrew
 25 expresses these three times of existing.²⁶ But concerning his nature he teaches nothing except that he is compassionate, kind, etc., and supremely jealous.²⁷ This is established by a great many passages in the Pentateuch. Next, he believed and taught that this being differs
 30 so from all other beings that it cannot be expressed by any image of anything seen, nor can it even be seen—not so much because the thing involves a contradiction as because of human weakness.²⁸ Moreover, he also taught that by reason of his power he is singular or unique.

[37] Moses conceded, of course, that there are beings which—doubtless from God's order and command—are God's agents, i.e., beings to whom God has given the authority, right and power to direct nations,
 [III/39] to provide for them and to care for them. But he taught that this being, whom [the Jews] were bound to worship, was the highest and supreme God, *or* (to use a Hebrew phrase) the God of Gods.²⁹ So in the song of Exodus (15:11) he said: יהוה במוכה באלים *who among the Gods is like you, Yahweh?* And Jethro [says] (in Exodus 18:11): עתה ידעתי כי גדול יהוה מכל *עתה ידעתי כי גדול יהוה מכל*
 5 *now I know that Yahweh is greater than all the Gods*, i.e., at last I

26. Spinoza takes the divine name to be derived from the verbal root *bayah*, *he is*, which, depending on pointing, prefixes, and context, can refer to past, present, or future existence. This interpretation stems from Exod. 3:14, which has been variously translated: *I am that I am* (KJV), *I am who I am* (RSV, NRSV), *I am what I am* (RSV, NRSV alt), *I will be what I will be* (RSV, NRSV alt). This passage has occasioned much discussion, on which see Childs 1974. Spinoza will return to the subject of the divine name in xiii, 10ff., where he will take Exod. 6:3 as his text.

27. At Deut. 4:24, Moses says of God that he is “a devouring fire, a jealous God.” HCSB comments that this combination of epithets expresses “the vehement passion of the Lord’s self-defense against idolatry and other acts of profanation.” Rashi 1960 offered a similar gloss on the use of this language in the Decalogue. (See SC at Exod. 20:5.)

28. That is, it is not (according to Moses) intrinsically impossible for God to be seen; it is only impossible for man to see God and survive the experience. Cf. Exod. 33:20–23, and in the TTP, i, 17–18; ii, 42–43; vii, 19.

29. Cf. Deut. 10:17. Mosaic theology, as Spinoza presents it, is a form of what is sometimes called monolatry: it acknowledges the existence of many gods, but calls upon the people of Israel to worship only one, who is represented as superior to the others and particularly concerned with the people of Israel. It appears that Moses may not have conceived these other gods as created by Yahweh, and some passages suggest that the worship of the other gods was thought appropriate for the inhabitants of other lands.

Though Spinoza’s reading of the Hebrew Bible is common today, it seems to have been unusual in Spinoza’s day. Maimonides interpreted language like *Elohim of the Elohim* to mean “deity of the angels” (*Guide* II, 6). Medieval commentators like Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Nachmanides all followed him, as did Manasseh 1842/1972, qu. 188, commenting on Ps. 95:3. Older translations also often followed this interpretation (e.g., both the older and the more recent JPS translations). For more recent discussions, see Freedman 1987, Scullion 1992, and the annotation to Exod. 15:11 in HCSB, which cites Exod. 12:12, among other passages, as illustrating that other gods are assumed to exist, even though they prove powerless in a contest with Yahweh.

am forced to concede to Moses that Yahweh is greater than all the Gods and uniquely powerful. But it can be doubted whether Moses believed that these beings who act as God's agents were created by God. As far as we know, he never said anything about their creation and beginning.

10 [38] In addition, he taught that this being [God] brought this visible world out of Chaos into order (see Genesis 1:2), that he put seeds in nature, and that therefore, he has the highest right and the highest power over all things,³⁰ and (see Deuteronomy 10:14–15) that in accordance with this highest right and power he chose, for himself alone, the
15 Hebrew nation and a certain region of the world (see Deuteronomy 4:19, 32:8–9), but that he left the other nations and regions to the care of the other Gods which he put in his place. That's why he was called the God of Israel and of Jerusalem (see 2 Chronicles 32:19), while the other Gods were called the Gods of the other nations.

20 [39] And that's why the Jews believed that the region God chose for himself required a special worship of God, completely different from that of other regions—indeed that it could not permit the worship of other Gods, which was proper³¹ to other regions. They believed the peoples the king of Assyria brought into the lands of the Jews were torn to pieces by lions because they did not know the worship of the
25 Gods of that land. (See 2 Kings 17:25, 26, etc.) [40] According to Ibn Ezra,³² that's why, when Jacob wanted to seek a homeland, he told his sons to prepare themselves for a new worship, and to put aside the alien Gods, i.e., the worship of the Gods of the land where they then were. (See Genesis 35:2–3.) Also when David wanted to tell Saul that
30 his persecution of him was forcing him to live outside his native land, he said that he was driven out of God's inheritance and sent to worship other Gods. (See 1 Samuel 26:19.)

[41] Finally, [Moses] believed that this being, *or* God, had his dwelling place in the heavens (see Deuteronomy 33:27),³³ an opinion which was very common among the Gentiles.

[III/40] If we attend now to Moses' revelations, we find that they were accommodated to these opinions. For because he believed that God's nature admits of all the conditions we have mentioned, compassion, kindness, etc., God was revealed to him according to this opinion and under

30. Note that Spinoza does not describe God's creative activity in a way which suggests creation out of nothing. Cf. CM II, x.

31. *proprium*, which can mean either "peculiar" or "appropriate."

32. Gebhardt V, 20, identifies the passage in Ibn Ezra as occurring in his commentary on Genesis 31:16 (Ibn Ezra 1988, V, 228).

33. Deut. 33:26 would be more accurate.

these attributes. (See Exodus 34:6–7, which tells how God appeared to
 5 Moses, and vss. 4–5 of the Decalogue [in Exodus 20].)

[42] Next, [Exodus] 33:18[–23] relates that Moses asked God to be
 allowed to see him. But since (as has already been said) Moses had not
 formed any image of God in his brain, and since (as I’ve already shown)
 God is revealed to the Prophets only according to the disposition of their
 10 imagination, God did not appear to him in any image.³⁴ I say that this
 happened because it was inconsistent with Moses’s imagination.³⁵ For
 other Prophets testify that they saw God, viz. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel,
 etc. [43] And for this reason God replied to Moses, *לא תוכל לראות את*
פני *you will not be able to see my face* [Exodus 33:20]. And because Moses
 15 believed that God is visible, i.e., that it implies no contradiction in the
 divine nature [for God to be seen]—for otherwise he would not have
 asked anything like that—[God] adds, *כי לא יראני האדם וחי* *since no one*
shall see me and live. So he gives Moses a reason consistent with Moses’
 own opinion. For he does not say that it involves a contradiction on
 the part of the divine nature [for God to be seen], as in fact it does,
 20 but that it cannot happen because of human weakness.

[44] Next, to reveal to Moses that because the Israelites had wor-
 shipped the calf, they had become like the other nations, God says
 (Exodus 33:2–3) that he will send an angel, i.e., a being which would
 take care of the Israelites in place of the supreme being, but that he
 does not wish to be among them. For this way left Moses nothing to
 25 show him that the Israelites were dearer to God than the other nations,
 which God also gave over to the care of other beings, *or* angels. This
 is shown by Exodus 33:16.

[45] Finally, because God was believed to live in the heavens, he was
 revealed as descending from heaven to the top of a mountain. Moses
 30 also went up the mountain to speak with God. This would not have
 been necessary at all, if he could, with equal ease, imagine God to be
 everywhere.

Even though God was revealed to the Israelites, they knew almost
 nothing about him. They showed this abundantly when, after a few days,
 they gave to a calf the honor and worship due to God, and believed
 that the calf was the Gods which had brought them out of Egypt. [See
 [III/41] Exodus 32:4.] [46] And certainly it is not credible that uneducated men,

34. The claim that God didn’t appear to Moses by any image seems contrary to i,
 18 and 21.

35. Manasseh, commenting on Exod. 24:11, reports it as the opinion of “the Sages
 of the Talmud” that “Moses did not make use of imagination in his prophecies, but that
 his intellectual powers were divested of all corporeal affections” (1842/1972, I, 187). Cf.
 Maimonides *Guide* II, 35–36.

accustomed to the superstitions of the Egyptians, and worn out by the most wretched bondage, would have understood anything sensible about God, or that Moses would have taught them anything other than a way of living—and that not as a Philosopher, so that they might eventually live well from freedom of mind, but as a Legislator, so that they were
 5 constrained to live well by the command of the Law.

[47] So the principle of living well, *or* the true life, and the worship and love of God, were to them more bondage than true freedom, and the grace and gift of God. For he commanded them to love God and to keep his law, that they might acknowledge the goods they had received from God, such as their freedom from bondage in Egypt. Next he terrified them
 10 with threats, if they transgressed those commands, and he promised them many goods if they respected them. So he taught them in the same way parents usually do children who are lacking in all reason.³⁶ Hence, it is certain that they did not know the excellence of virtue and true blessedness.

[48] Jonah thought he could flee from God's sight [Jonah 1:3]. This
 15 seems to show that he too believed that God had entrusted the care of the regions outside Judaea to other powers, whom he had assigned to act for him.

There is no one in the Old Testament who spoke about God more rationally than Solomon, who surpassed everyone in his age in the natural light. That's why he also thought himself above the Law—for
 20 it was imparted only to those who lack reason and the teachings of the natural intellect. All the laws concerning the king (there were chiefly three of these; see Deuteronomy 17:16–17), he regarded as of little importance; indeed, he clearly violated them.³⁷ In doing this, however, he erred, and by indulging in sensual pleasures he acted in a way
 25 unworthy of a Philosopher. He taught that all the goods of fortune are hollow for mortals (see Ecclesiastes), that men have nothing more excellent than the intellect, and that there is no greater punishment for them than folly (see Proverbs 16:22).³⁸

[49] But let us return to the Prophets, whose differences of opinion
 30 we have undertaken to note. The Rabbis who left us those books of

36. Gebhardt V, 20, compares this with similar passages in Maimonides (*Guide* III, 32) and Calvin (*Institutes* II, xi, 13).

37. 1 Kings combines high praise for Solomon (in 10:23–24) with sharp criticism (in 11:1–13).

38. On the authorship of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, see the notes at x, 5, and xix, 8. Perhaps Spinoza oversimplifies the teaching of Ecclesiastes. It's true that its author expresses contempt for the goods of fortune in passages like 6:1–6; but sometimes he includes wisdom and knowledge among the things he finds vain—e.g., in 1:16–18, a passage Spinoza quotes in the *Ethics* (IV P17S). Manasseh's discussion of the *prima facie* contradictions in Ecclesiastes (1842/1972, II, 299–324) deserves attention.

the Prophets now extant found the opinions of Ezekiel so inconsistent with those of Moses that—as we are told in the treatise on the Sabbath (ch. I, 13b)—they almost decided not to admit his book among the canonical ones,³⁹ and would have completely hidden it if a certain Hananias had not taken it upon himself to explain it. They say (as the [III/42] story goes there) that he finally did this, with great labor and zeal. But it isn't clear enough how he did it. Did he write a commentary, which is now, by chance, lost? Or was he so bold that he changed the very words and utterances of Ezekiel and arranged them according to his own mentality? Whatever he did, Chapter 18, at least, does not seem
5 to agree with Exodus 34:7 or with Jeremiah 32:18, etc.⁴⁰

[50] Samuel believed that when God has decreed something, he never repents of his decree (see 1 Samuel 15:29), for when Saul to repenting of his sin, wanted to worship God, and to ask forgiveness of him, he said to him that God would not change his decree against him. To
10 Jeremiah, on the other hand, it was revealed (18:8–10) that whether God has decreed some harm or some good to a nation, he may repent of his decree, provided that men also, from the time of his judgment, change for better or for worse. But Joel taught that God repents only of harm (see 2:13).

[51] Finally, Genesis 4:7 shows most clearly that man can overcome
15 the temptations of sin and act well. For this is said to Cain, who, however, never overcame them. Both Scripture and Josephus establish this.⁴¹ The same thing may also be inferred most clearly from the chapter of Jeremiah just mentioned. For it says that God may repent of a decree

39. Arguably Spinoza has misunderstood the passage from the Talmud which he cites. Shabbath 13b reports that: “R. Judah (250–290) said in Rab’s (220–250) name: In truth, that man Hananiah, son of Hezekiah (early first century) by name, is to be remembered with blessing; but for him the book of Ezekiel would have been withdrawn, for its words contradicted the Torah. What did he do? Three hundred barrels of oil were taken up to him, and he sat in an upper chamber and reconciled the contradictions.” I follow the translation given in Leiman 1976, 72. Leiman argues that the term here translated *withdraw*, נָסַח, does not imply a denial of canonical status, but only a withdrawal of the book from circulation, on the ground that it contains problematic material, including material which could encourage heretical ideas (p. 79). Cf. X, 43–47.

40. The reference is evidently to Ezek. 18:14–20, which denies that the sins of the fathers will be visited upon their children. Manasseh, commenting on the apparent inconsistency between this verse and Exod. 20:5, observes that “Not only do these verses appear to contradict each other, but on a proper examination of sacred history, it will be found that there are many opposite statements on this point” (1842/1972, I, 164). He canvasses a number of different solutions and claims that the texts can be reconciled by any of them.

The fact that a *prima facie* inconsistency has been left standing does not seem consistent with Spinoza’s suggestion that Hananiah may have secured Ezekiel a place in the canon by altering his text to make it consistent with the teachings of the other prophets.

41. The reference is to Josephus, *Antiquities* I, ii, 2.

issued for the harm or good of men, depending on whether men are
 20 willing to change their practices and way of living. On the other hand,
 Paul teaches nothing more expressly than that men have no control
 over the temptations of the flesh except by the special calling and grace
 of God. See Romans 9:10ff.⁴² Note that when he attributes justice to
 God in 3:5 and 6:19, he corrects himself, because he is speaking thus
 25 in a human way, on account of the weakness of the flesh.

[52] The passages we have discussed establish more than adequately
 what we proposed to show: that God accommodated his revelations
 to the power of understanding and to the opinions of the Prophets,
 and that the Prophets could be ignorant of things which concern only
 speculation, but not those which concern loving-kindness and how to
 30 conduct our lives,⁴³ and that they really were ignorant and had contrary
 opinions [regarding speculative matters]. So we really should not seek
 knowledge of natural and spiritual things from them.

[53] We conclude, therefore, that we are not bound to believe the
 Prophets regarding anything except what is the end and substance of
 revelation.⁴⁴ In all other things each person is free to believe as he
 pleases. For example, the revelation to Cain [Gen. 4:6–7] teaches us
 [III/43] only that God warned him to lead a true life, for that was the only
 intent and substance of the revelation, not teach the freedom of the
 will or Philosophic matters. So even though the freedom of the will
 is contained very clearly in the words and reasonings of that warning,
 we are permitted to think the will is not free, since those words and
 5 reasonings were only accommodated to Cain's power of understanding.

[54] Similarly, the revelation to Micaiah [1 Kings 22:19] means to
 teach only that God revealed to Micaiah the true outcome of the battle
 of Ahab against Aram. So this again is all we are bound to believe.
 Whatever else is contained in that revelation, regarding the true and
 10 false Spirit of God, and the host of heaven standing on each side of
 God, and all the other circumstances of that revelation, does not touch

42. The passage cited here has also been quoted in Volume I, cf. I/264–65, and will recur in the correspondence. The metaphor of the potter and the clay used there by Paul is also used, to an apparently different purpose, by Jeremiah in the chapter cited above. Spinoza's treatment of Paul as a prophet seems to conflict with the position he takes in Ch. xi.

43. Cf. Maimonides, *Guide*, II, 38. Spinoza here treats the question of man's ability to overcome temptation as a speculative matter, but it does seem to bear on practical matters. If we think people can't overcome temptation, this may affect whether we treat their shortcomings with forbearance.

44. Cf. Maimonides *Guide* II, 38: "Know that the true prophets indubitably grasp speculative matters" (Gebhardt V, 22).

us at all. So concerning those things each one may believe what seems more consistent with his reason.

[55] Concerning the reasonings by which God showed Job his power over all things [Job 38–41]—if indeed it is true that they were revealed
 15 to Job and that the author [of that book] was concerned to narrate a history, not, as some believe,⁴⁵ to embellish his conceptions [by giving them a concrete form]—we must say the same thing: that they were adduced according to Job’s power of understanding, and only to convince him, not that they are universal reasons for convincing everyone.

[56] We should maintain the same thing about the reasonings by
 20 which Christ convicted the Pharisees of stubbornness and ignorance, and exhorted his disciples to the true life: he accommodated his reasonings to the opinions and principles of each one. E.g., when he said to the Pharisees (Matthew 12:26), *if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then should his kingdom stand?*, he just wanted to convince the Pharisees
 25 from their own principles, not to teach that there are Devils, or that there is a kingdom of Devils.⁴⁶ Likewise, when he said to his disciples (Matthew 18:10), *see that you do not disdain one of those little ones, for I say to you that in the heavens their Angels etc. [always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven]*. For he just wanted to teach them not to be proud and not to
 30 disdain anyone, but not the rest of the things which are contained in his reasons, which he offers only to persuade his disciples better.

[57] Finally, we must say absolutely the same thing about the reasonings and signs of the Apostles. There is no need to speak more fully about these matters. For if I had to enumerate all those Passages in Scripture which are written only *ad hominem*, or, according to someone’s
 [III/44] power of understanding, and which cannot be defended as divine teaching without great prejudice to Philosophy, I would give up the brevity I desire. Let it suffice, therefore, to have touched on a few, universal things. The rest the curious reader may weigh for himself.

[58] Although only the things we have said about the Prophets and
 5 Prophecy pertain particularly to my purpose of separating Philosophy from Theology, nevertheless, because I have treated Prophecy generally, I want to ask now whether the gift of Prophecy was peculiar to the Hebrews or whether it was common to all nations. We also need to ask what we must maintain about the calling of the Hebrews. That’s
 10 the object of the following chapter.

45. Maimonides is apparently one of the people criticized here. Cf. x, 16–18. I’ve discussed Spinoza’s interpretation of Job in Curley 2002.

46. Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan* viii, 25–26.

[III/44]

CHAPTER III

On the Calling of the Hebrews

AND WHETHER THE GIFT OF PROPHECY WAS PECULIAR TO THE HEBREWS

[1] The true happiness and blessedness of each person consists only
15 in the enjoyment of the good, and not in a self-esteem founded on
the fact that he alone enjoys the good, all others being excluded from
it. For whoever views himself as more blessed because things are well
with him, but not with others, or because he is more blessed and more
fortunate than others, does not know true happiness and blessedness.
20 The joy he derives from that comparison comes from envy and a bad
heart—if it isn't mere childishness.

[2] For example, the true happiness and blessedness of man consists
only in wisdom and in knowledge of the truth, not at all in the fact
that he is wiser than others, or that others lack true knowledge. For
their ignorance does not increase his wisdom at all, i.e., his true hap-
25 piness. So someone who rejoices for that reason rejoices because of an
evil occurring to someone else. He is envious and evil, failing to know
either true wisdom or the peace of true life.

[3] To exhort the Hebrews to obey the law Scripture says

[i] that God chose them for himself before the other nations (Deuter-
onomy 10:15),

30 [ii] that he is close to them, but not to others (Deuteronomy 4:4–7),

[iii] that he has prescribed just laws only for them (Deuteronomy 4:8),
and finally,

[iv] that he has made himself known only to them, the others being
treated as inferior (Deuteronomy 4:32), etc.

When it says this, it speaks only according to the power of under-
[III/45] standing of people who, as we have shown in the preceding chapter,
and as Moses himself witnesses (Deuteronomy 9:6–7), did not know
true blessedness. [4] For surely they would have been no less blessed if
God had called all equally to salvation; God would have been no less
well-disposed toward them, if he had been equally close to the others;
5 the laws would have been no less just, and the Hebrew people no less

wise, if the laws had been prescribed to all; miracles would have shown God's power no less if they had been performed for the sake of other nations also; and finally, the Hebrews would have been no less bound to worship God if God had bestowed all these gifts equally on all people.

[5] Moreover, what God says to Solomon—that no one after him
10 would be as wise as he was (1 Kings 3:12)—seems to be only a manner of speaking, to signify exceptional wisdom. However that may be, we must not in any way believe that God promised Solomon, for his greater happiness, that he would not afterward bestow such great wisdom on anyone else. For this would not increase Solomon's intellect at all, and a
15 wise King would give no less thanks to God for such a great gift, even if God had said that he would endow everyone with the same wisdom.¹

[6] But though we say that in the passages of the Pentateuch just cited Moses was speaking according to the Hebrews' power of understanding, we still don't wish to deny that God prescribed those laws
20 of the Pentateuch only to them, or that he spoke only to them, or, finally, that the Hebrews saw wonders whose like no other nation ever saw. We mean only that Moses wanted to warn the Hebrews in this way, and especially by these reasons, so that he might bind them more to the worship of God, in accordance with their childish power
25 of understanding. Next, we wished to show that the Hebrews did not excel the other nations in 'knowledge or in piety, but in something altogether different—or (to speak, with Scripture, according to their power of understanding) that, though the Hebrews were frequently warned, they were not chosen by God before all others for a true life and lofty speculations, but for something entirely different. What this
30 was, I shall show here in an orderly fashion.

[7] But before I begin, I want to explain briefly what in the following I shall understand by God's guidance, by God's aid (both external and internal), by God's choice, and finally, by fortune.

[III/46] By *God's guidance* I understand the fixed and immutable order of nature, or the connection of natural things.

[8] For we have said above, and have already shown elsewhere,² that the universal laws of nature, according to which all things happen and are determined, are nothing but the eternal decrees of God, which always involve eternal truth and necessity. Therefore, whether

1. Gebhardt notes a similar passage in Meyer 1666, 22 (iii, 21).

2. The earlier passage where this has been said is probably i, 44. The other work where this has been shown is probably CM II, 9 (I/267/17ff.), though as ALM note, this compromises the anonymity of the TTP. But I do not think Spinoza would be referring to the unpublished *Ethics*, and as ALM also note, ADN. VI also refers to the CM.

CHAPTER III: THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

we say that all things happen according to the laws of nature, or that
5 they are ordered according to the decree and guidance of God, we
say the same thing.

[9] Next, because the power of all natural things is nothing but the
power itself of God, through which alone all things happen and are
determined, from this it follows that whatever man, who is also a part
of nature, provides for himself, as an aid to preserving his being, or
10 whatever nature supplies him with, without his doing anything him-
self, it is the power of God alone which provides these things for him,
inasmuch as it acts either through human nature or through things
outside human nature. Therefore,

whatever human nature can furnish for preserving its being from its own
power alone, we can rightly call *God's internal aid*, and

whatever in addition turns out for his advantage from the power of
15 external causes, we can rightly call *God's external aid*.

[10] From these considerations it is easy to infer what must be under-
stood by *God's choice*. For since no one does anything except according
to the predetermined order of nature, i.e., according to God's eternal
guidance and decree, it follows that

20 no one chooses any manner of living for himself, or does anything, except
by the special calling of God, who has chosen him before others for this
work, or for this manner of living.

[11] Finally,

by *fortune* I understand nothing but God's guidance, insofar as it directs
human affairs through external and unforeseen causes.

With these preliminaries, we shall return to our purpose, which was
25 to see why the Hebrew nation was said to have been chosen by God
before others. To show this, I proceed as follows.

[12] Whatever we can honorably desire is related above all to these
three things:

- [i] understanding things through their first causes;
- 30 [ii] gaining control over the passions, *or* acquiring the habit of virtue;
and finally,
- [iii] living securely and healthily.

The means which lead directly to the first and second of these, and
can be considered their proximate and efficient causes, are contained
in human nature itself. So acquiring them depends chiefly on our

power alone, *or* on the laws of human nature alone. For this reason we must maintain, without qualification, that these gifts are not peculiar [III/47] to any nation, but have always been common to the whole human race—unless we want to dream that formerly nature produced different kinds of men.

[13] But the means which lead to living securely and preserving the body are chiefly placed in external things, and for that reason they are
5 called gifts of fortune, because they depend for the most part on the governance of external causes of which we are ignorant. So in this matter, the wise man and the fool are almost equally happy or unhappy.

Nevertheless, to live securely, and to avoid injuries from other men and from the beasts, human governance and vigilance can be a great
10 help. [14] To this end reason and experience have taught no more certain means than to form a social order with definite laws, to occupy a definite area of the world, and to reduce the powers of all, as it were, into one body, the body of the social order.

But to form and preserve a social order requires no small talent and vigilance. So a social order which for the most part is founded and
15 directed by prudent and vigilant men will be more secure, more stable, and less subject to fortune. Conversely, if a social order is established by men of untrained intelligence, it will depend for the most part on fortune and will be less stable. [15] If, in spite of this, it has lasted a long time, it will owe this to the guidance of another, not to its own
20 guidance. Indeed, if it has overcome great dangers and matters have turned out favorably for it, it will only be able to wonder at and revere the guidance of God (i.e., insofar as God acts through hidden external causes, but not insofar as he acts through human nature and the human mind). Since nothing has happened to it except what is completely unexpected and contrary to opinion, this can even be considered to
25 be really a miracle.

[16] The only thing which distinguishes one nation from one another, then, is the social order and the laws under which they live and by which they are directed. So the Hebrew nation was not chosen by God before others because of its intellect or its peace of mind, but because
30 of its social order and the fortune by which it came to have a state, and kept it for so many years.

[17] This is also established most plainly by Scripture itself. For if you run through it even casually, you will see clearly that the Hebrews excelled the other nations only in this: they handled their security auspiciously, and overcame great dangers. For the most part this was
[III/48] just by God's external aid. In other things, you will see that they were equal to others, and that God was equally well-disposed to all. [18] As

far as the intellect is concerned, it is clear (as we have shown in the preceding chapter) that they had quite ordinary thoughts about God and nature. They were not chosen by God before others for their
 5 intellect. But neither were they chosen because of their virtue and true life. For in this respect also they were equal to the other nations and only a very few were chosen. [19] Their election, therefore, and their calling consisted only in the enduring prosperity of their state and in [other temporal] advantages.

Nor do we see that God promised the Patriarchs^{3**} or their successors
 10 anything more than this. Indeed, all the Law promises for obedience is the continual prosperity of their state and the other advantages of this life. Conversely, [it threatened] nothing for obstinacy and breaking the covenant except the ruin of their state and the greatest [temporal] disadvantages.⁴

[20] This is not surprising. For the end of the whole social order and of the state—as is evident from what has just been said and as we shall show more fully in what follows—is to live securely and conveniently.⁵ Moreover, a state can stand firm only if there are Laws by
 15 which each one is bound. But if all the members of a social order wish to abandon the laws, they thereby dissolve the social order and destroy the state. [21] So nothing else could be promised to the social order of the Hebrews, for their constant observance of the laws, except security
 20 of life^{6**} and the advantages [security provides]. Conversely, no more certain punishment for obstinacy could be predicted than the ruin of the state, and the evils which commonly follow from that, along with the other evils which would arise especially for them because of the

3. **[ADN. IV] In Gen. 15[:1] it's related that God said to Abraham that he was his defender and that he would give him a very great reward. To this Abraham replied that he could expect nothing which would be of any importance, because, though already in advanced old age, he was childless.

4. In particular, the Hebrew Bible makes no promise of eternal life in return for obedience. Lucas's biography of Spinoza (1927) reports that one reason for the excommunication was that Spinoza denied the existence of scriptural evidence for immortality (and argued that the evidence for mortality was much stronger). Cf. i, 28. See also Nadler 2001.

5. In xx, 12, Spinoza will claim that the end of the state is really freedom (ALM). See the annotation there for more on this.

6. **[ADN. V] From Mark 10:21 it's evident that observing the commandments of the Old Testament does not suffice for eternal life. [In Mark 10:17–22 a rich man asks Jesus what he needs to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus first says he must keep the commandments. When the rich man says he has done that, Jesus replies that he lacks one thing: he must sell what he owns, give the money to the poor, and follow Jesus. For useful discussion of the history of the interpretations of this challenging verse, see Anchor Mark, II, 727–30. There are parallel versions, with interesting variations, in Matt. 19:16–22 and Luke 18:18–25.]

ruin their particular state. But for the present there is no need to treat these things more fully.⁷

[22] I add only this: the Laws of the Old Testament were revealed
 25 and prescribed only to the Jews. For since God chose only them to
 constitute a particular social order and state, they necessarily had to
 have special laws. Whether God prescribed special laws to other nations
 also and revealed himself to their Legislators prophetically, i.e., under
 30 those attributes by which they were accustomed to imagine God, that
 seems to me not sufficiently established. But this, at least, is evident
 from Scripture itself: that by God's external guidance the other nations
 also had a state and their own special laws. [23] To show this I'll cite
 just two passages of Scripture.

In Genesis 14:18–20 it is related that Melchizedek was king of
 [III/49] Jerusalem⁸ and priest of God, the most high, and that he blessed
 Abraham, as was the right of the Priest (see Numbers 6:23), and finally,
 that Abraham, the beloved of God, gave a tenth of all his spoils to the
 priest of God. [24] All these things show clearly enough that, before
 5 God founded the People of Israel, he had established kings and priests
 in Jerusalem, and prescribed customs and laws for them. Whether he
 did this prophetically or not—that, as we have said, is not sufficiently
 clear. But this much, at least, I'm persuaded of: while Abraham lived
 there, he lived scrupulously according to those laws. For Abraham did
 not receive any rites specially from God; nevertheless Genesis 26:5 says
 10 that Abraham observed the worship, precepts, institutions and Laws of
 God. Doubtless these must be understood to be the worship, precepts,
 institutions and laws of king Melchizedek.

[25] Again, Malachi (1:10–11) reproaches the Jews in these words:
 מי גם בכם ויסגור דלתים ולא תאירו מזבחי חנם אין לי חפץ בכם וגו': כי ממזרח שמש
 ועד מבוא גדול שמי בגוים ובכל מקום מוקטר מוגש לשמי ומנחה טהורה כי גדול שמי
 אות צבאות *Who is there among you who will close the doors* (sc.
 of the temple), *so that the fire shall not be placed on my altar in vain; I*
take no pleasure in you, etc. For from the rising of the sun to its setting, my

7. Bennett notes the shift in this paragraph from talk about goods “promised” for obedience to the laws to talk about “punishments predicted” for disobedience. Given the impersonality of Spinoza's conception of God, his identification (in iii, 7) of God's activity with the operation of the laws of nature, and his denial in the next chapter that God can be a lawgiver, the language of prediction can be taken more literally than the language of promises and threats.

8. Kirchmann (1871, 25–26) accused Spinoza of a gross error for identifying Melchizedek as the king of Jerusalem, when Gen. 14:18 identifies him as the king of Salem. He supposed Jerusalem to have been built much later, by David. ALM suggest that Spinoza is relying on a tradition which goes back to Josephus (*Antiquities* I, x, 2), according to which Salem was later called Jerusalem. But Spinoza may have been relying on the biblical passage which was probably the ultimate basis for Josephus's claim, Ps. 76:2.

CHAPTER III: THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

name is great among the nations, and everywhere incense is set before me,
20 *and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the God of hosts.* Unless we want to do violence to these words,⁹ they can only be taken as referring to the present time. So they testify more than adequately that the Jews of that time were no more beloved of God than the other Nations, indeed, that God had, by miracles, become
25 more known to the other Nations than to the Jews of that time, who had then regained a part of their state without miracles, and finally, that the Nations had rites and ceremonies which were acceptable to God.

[26] But I put these matters to one side. It is enough for my purposes to have shown that the Jews' election concerned nothing but the temporal prosperity of the body, and freedom, *or* a state, and the
30 manner and means by which they acquired it, and hence also the Laws, insofar as they were necessary for making that particular state stable, and finally, the manner in which those laws were revealed. In other things, and in those in which the true happiness of man consists, I have shown that they were equal to the other nations.

[27] So when it is said in Scripture (see Deut. 4:7) that no Nation
[III/50] has Gods as close to it as the Jews have God, that must be understood only with respect to the state and only concerning that time in which so many miracles happened to them. For with respect to intellect and virtue, i.e., with respect to blessedness, God, as we have said and shown by reason itself, is equally well-disposed to all. This is also sufficiently established by Scripture itself.

5 [28] For the Psalmist says (Ps. 145:18): קרוב יהוה לכל קוראיו לכל אשר *God is near to all who call him, to all who truly call him.* Similarly in the same Psalm, vs. 9: טוב יהוה לכל ורחמי על כל מעשיו *God is*
beneficent to all, and his compassion (is) towards all things which he has made.

10 In Ps. 33:15 it is said clearly that God has given the same intellect to all, in these words: יהוה היוצר יהוה לבם *who forms their heart in the same way.* For the Hebrews believed the heart to be the seat of the soul and of the intellect, as I believe everyone knows well enough.

[29] Again, Job 28:28¹⁰ establishes that God prescribed this Law to
15 the whole human race: to revere God and to abstain from evil works, *or* to act well. So although Job was a gentile, he was most acceptable of

9. Some translations have put verse 11 in the future tense, e.g., the KJV: "my name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense *shall be* offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name *shall be* great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts." And some Christian readers have thus interpreted Malachi as prophesying the worldwide worship of the Christian church. The Vulgate, the NRSV, and the NJPS translation put verse 11 in the present tense. For discussion, see Anchor Malachi, 218–19.

10. Gebhardt has 29:28 here, which is clearly wrong. Droetto/Giancotti correct to 28:28, calling attention to III/54/18.

all to God, since he surpassed everyone in piety and in religion. Finally, Jonah 4:2 establishes most clearly that God is well-disposed, compassionate, long-suffering, full of beneficence, and repentant of evil toward
 20 all men and not only toward the Jews. For Jonah says *for that reason I decided before to flee to Tarsus because I knew* (from the words of Moses in Exodus 34:6) *that you are a God who is well-disposed, compassionate, etc.* and therefore would pardon the gentiles of Nineveh.

25 [30] We conclude, then—since God is equally well-disposed to all and chose the Hebrews only with respect to their social order and their state—that each Jew, considered alone and outside that social order and state, possesses no gift of God which would place him above other men, and that there is no difference between him and a gentile.

[31] Since God is equally beneficent, compassionate, etc., to all, and
 30 the function of the Prophet was to teach men, not the special laws of their native land so much as true virtue, and to advise them about that, there is no doubt that all the nations had Prophets, and that the gift of Prophecy was not peculiar to the Jews. Indeed, both sacred and profane histories testify to this. Although the sacred histories of the Old Testa-
 [III/51] ment do not establish that the other Nations had as many Prophets as the Hebrews, or indeed that God sent any gentile Prophet expressly to the nations, that does not matter. For the Hebrews were concerned to write only of their own affairs, and not those of other nations.

[32] It is enough, then, that we should find in the Old Testament
 5 men who were gentiles and uncircumcised (like Noah, Enoch, Abimelech, and Balaam) and prophesied, and that God sent the Hebrew Prophets not only to their own nation, but also to many others.¹¹ For Ezekiel prophesied to all the nations then known. Obadiah prophesied, so far as we know, only to the Edomites, and Jonah, principally to the Ninevites.

10 [33] Isaiah not only lamented and predicted the calamities of the Jews, and sang of their restoration, he also lamented the calamities of other nations. For he says in 16:9 *על כן אבכה בבכי יעזר Therefore I shall mourn with the weeping of Jazer*; and in ch. 19 he predicts first the calamities of the Egyptians, and afterward their restoration (see 19:19, 20, 21, 25).
 15 He says God will send a Savior to them, who will free them, that God will become known to them, and finally, that the Egyptians will worship God with sacrifices and offerings. In the end he calls this nation *Blessed Egypt, people of God*. All these things are most worthy of being noted.

11. ALM point out that support can be found in the Talmud for the possibility of prophets among the gentiles, and of Hebrew prophets to the gentiles. See Baba Bathra 15b. But it seems that there was strong opposition to the idea among Spinoza's Jewish contemporaries. See iii, 40, and the annotation there.

[34] Finally, Jeremiah is called not only a Prophet of the Hebrew
 20 people, but a Prophet of the nations without exception (see 1:5). He
 too laments when he predicts the calamities of the nations, and predicts
 their restoration; for he says in 48:31 *על כן על מואב איילל ולמואב כלה אזעק*
Therefore I wail for Moab, I cry out for all Moab etc., and in 48:36 *על כן*
 25 *לבי למואב כחללים יהמה* *Therefore my heart beats for Moab like a drum*. And
 finally he predicts their restoration, as he does also the restoration of
 the Egyptians, the Ammonites and the Elamites.

[35] So there is no doubt that the other nations had their own
 Prophets also, as the Jews did, who prophesied to them and to the
 30 Jews. Although Scripture mentions only Balaam to whom the future
 affairs of the Jews and of other nations were revealed, nevertheless it
 is not credible that Balaam prophesied only on that occasion. For the
 narrative itself establishes very clearly that he had long been famous
 for prophecy and other divine gifts. When Balak bids him to come to
 [III/52] him, he says (Numbers 22:6) *כי ידעתי את אשר תברך יבורך ואשר תאר יואר*
since I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is
cursed. So he had that same power which God bestowed on Abraham
 (see Genesis 12:3).

[36] Again, Balaam replies to the messengers like one who is accus-
 5 tomed to prophecies, saying that they should wait for him until the will
 of God is revealed to him. When he prophesied, i.e., when he interpreted
 the true mind of God, he was accustomed to say this of himself: *נאם*
שומע אמרי אל ויודע דעת עליון מחזה שדי יחזה נופל וגלוי עינים *the oracle of him*
who hears the dictates of God, and who knows the 'knowledge' (or mind and
 10 *foreknowledge) of the most high, who sees the vision of the almighty, falling*
*down, but with his eyes open.*¹² Finally, after he has blessed the Hebrews
 according to the command of God, he began (as was his custom) to
 prophesy to the other nations and to predict their future affairs.

[37] All these things indicate more than adequately either that Balaam
 was always a Prophet, or that he prophesied quite frequently, and
 15 (what is still to be noted here) that he had what mainly rendered the
 Prophets certain of the truth of their prophecy: a heart inclined only to
 the right and the good. For he did not bless those whom he wished to
 and curse those whom he wished to, as Balak thought, but only those
 whom God willed to be blessed or cursed. That is why he replied to
 20 Balak *even if Balak should give me enough silver and gold to fill his house,*
I cannot transgress God's edict, to do good or evil according to my own will;
*what God speaks I will speak.*¹³

12. Num. 24:16, cf. 24:4.

13. Num. 24:13, cf. 22:18.

[38] As for the fact that God was angry with him while he was on his journey, that also happened to Moses, when, in accordance with God's command (see Exodus 4:24), he was setting out for Egypt. As for the
 25 fact that he accepted money for prophesying, Samuel did the same (see 1 Samuel 9:7–8). And if he sinned in some matter (concerning this, see 2 Peter 2:15–16 and Jude 11), *no one is so righteous that he always acts well and never sins* (see Ecclesiastes 7:20). Surely his utterances must
 30 always have had great value before God and his power of cursing was certainly very great, since it is found so often in Scripture (in order to show God's great compassion toward the Israelites) that God would not listen to Balaam and that he turned his curse into a blessing (see Deuteronomy 23:6,¹⁴ Joshua 24:10, Nehemiah 13:2). So there is no doubt that he was most acceptable to God. For the utterances and
 [III/53] curses of impious men do not move God at all.

[39] So since Balaam was a true Prophet and nevertheless Joshua (13:22) calls him קוסם, *divine* or *soothsayer*, it is certain that this term is also taken in a good sense: those whom the gentiles were accustomed to call soothsayers and divines were true Prophets, and those whom Scrip-
 5 ture often accuses and condemns were Pseudo-divines, who deceived the nations as the Pseudo-prophets deceived the Jews. Scripture clearly establishes this too in other passages. So we conclude that the gift of Prophecy was not peculiar to the Jews, but common to all the nations.

10 [40] Still, the Pharisees bitterly maintain the contrary, that this divine gift was peculiar to their nation, and that the other nations predicted future affairs by I know not what diabolical power.¹⁵ What will superstition not invent? The main passage they cite, to confirm this opinion by the authority of the Old Testament, is Exodus 33:16, where Moses
 15 says to God: ובמה יודע אפה¹⁶ כי מצאתי חן בעיניך אני ועמך הלא בלכתך עמנו ונפלינו על פני האדמה *for how shall it be known that I and your people have found grace in your eyes? surely when you go with us, and we are separated, I and your people, from every people on the surface of the earth.*

20 [41] From this the Pharisees want to infer that Moses asked God to be present to the Jews, to reveal himself prophetically to them, and to grant this grace to no other nation.

14. Spinoza follows the numbering of the Hebrew Bible here. The reference is to Deut. 23:5.

15. Ibn Ezra (1988) denied that there were heathen prophets and that Balaam was a prophet. See his commentary on Deut. 13:2 and Num. 22:28. He maintains that Balaam was a diviner who made use of astrology. Rashi's commentary (1960) on Exod. 33:16–17 allows that Balaam was a prophet, and that there were other heathen prophets, but denies that Balaam was able to prophesy because the glory of the Lord rested on him. He contends that the heathen prophets heard God's message "through a medium."

16. MT: אפה.

It's ridiculous, of course, that Moses should envy God's presence to the nations, or that he should have dared to ask such a thing of God. But the fact is that after Moses knew the mentality and stubborn heart
 25 of his nation, he saw clearly that they could not finish what they had begun without the greatest miracles and the special external aid of God—indeed, that they would necessarily perish without such aid. To establish that God wished them to be preserved, he asked this special external aid of God. So he says in [Exodus] 34:9 *if I have found grace in*
 30 *your eyes, Lord, may the Lord go among us, since this is a stiff-necked people, etc.* [42] The reason, then, why he asked this special external aid of God was that the people were stubborn. And God's response shows even more clearly that Moses asked for nothing beyond this special external aid of God. For he immediately replied (Exodus 34:10): *Behold, I make*
 [III/54] *a covenant, that in the presence of your whole people I shall do wonders which*
have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. So Moses deals here only with the choice of the Hebrews, as I have explained it, and does not ask anything else of God.

[43] Nevertheless, in Paul's epistle to the Romans I find another text which moves me more, viz. 3:1–2, where Paul seems to teach something
 5 other than what we do here. For he says *what, then, is the superiority of the Jew? or what is the advantage of circumcision? it is great in every way; for the primary one is that the utterances of God were entrusted to him.*

But if we attend to the doctrine which Paul mainly wants to teach, we shall find nothing contrary to our doctrine; on the contrary, we shall
 10 find that he teaches the same thing we do here. For he says (3:29) that God is the God both of the Jews and of the nations, and in 2:25–26: *if he who is circumcised departs from the law, his circumcision will be made a foreskin; on the other hand, if he who has a foreskin observes the commandment of the law, his foreskin will be counted as circumcision.* [44] Again, in 3:9
 15 and 4:15 he says that all—the Jews and the nations equally—have been under sin, but that there is no sin without a commandment and a law.

From this it is established with the utmost clarity that the law was revealed to everyone without exception (as we have also shown above from Job 28:28), and that all have lived under the law, i.e., under that
 20 law which concerns only true virtue, and not that which is established according to the nature and constitution of some particular state, and is accommodated to the mentality of one nation.

[45] Finally, Paul concludes that since God is the God of all nations, i.e., since he is equally well-disposed to all, and all were
 25 equally under the law and sin, God sent to all nations his Christ, who would free all equally from bondage to the law, so that they would no longer act well because of the Law's commandment, but

because of a constant decision of the heart. So Paul teaches exactly what we require.

[46] When Paul says that *the utterances of God were entrusted only to the Jews*, either we must understand that only to them were the Laws entrusted in writing, but that to the other nations they were entrusted
 30 only by revelation and concept,¹⁷ or we must say that (since Paul was concerned to rebut an objection which only the Jews could make) he was replying according to the power of understanding of the Jews, and the opinions then received among them. For in order to teach those things which he partly saw and partly heard, he was a Greek with the Greeks and a Jew with the Jews.¹⁸

[47] Now all that remains is to reply to certain arguments by which
 [III/55] they¹⁹ want to persuade themselves that the choice of the Hebrews was not for a time, and in relation only to their state, but eternal. For they say: [i] we see that after the loss of their state the Jews have survived for many years, though they were scattered everywhere and separated
 5 from all the nations. This has not happened to any other Nation. And [ii] we see that in many places the Sacred Texts seem to teach that God chose the Jews unto himself to eternity. So even if they have lost their state, they remain God's chosen people.

[48] There are two principal passages which they think teach this eternal choice most clearly: (1) Jeremiah 31:36, where the Prophet
 10 testifies that the seed of Israel will remain God's nation to eternity, evidently comparing them with the fixed order of the heavens and of nature; and (2) Ezekiel 20:32[–44], where [the Prophet] seems to claim that even though the Jews deliberately choose to abandon the worship of God, he will still gather them from all the regions into which they have been dispersed, lead them to the wilderness of the peoples (as he
 15 led their ancestors to the wilderness of Egypt), and at last, after he has weeded out the rebels and the transgressors from among them, lead them from there to the mount of his holiness, where the whole house of Israel will worship him.

[49] It's common—especially among the Pharisees—to bring up other passages besides these. But I think I will satisfy everyone if I reply to

17. Presumably there is a reference here to the Pauline doctrine that the law is written in the hearts of the gentiles (Rom. 2:15).

18. See 1 Cor. 9:19–23, cited again in vi, 36, and xi, 23.

19. Spinoza does not make his subject explicit here. From §40 we might suppose he is speaking only of the Pharisees. But the beginning of §49 suggests that he means Jews generally, and especially the Pharisees. Gebhardt V, 28, notes that Rabbi Morteira, one of Spinoza's teachers, had defended the eternity of the Jews' election in *Providência de Dios con Israel*. He thinks the passage to follow must have its origins in the defense of his opinions Spinoza is reported to have written after the excommunication.

20 these two. This I will do very easily, once I have shown from Scripture itself that God did not choose the Hebrews to eternity, but only on the same condition on which he previously chose the Canaanites. They too, as we have shown above,²⁰ had priests who worshipped God scrupulously. But God still rejected them on account of their extravagant living, their negligence, and their bad worship. [50] For in Leviticus 25 18:27–28 Moses warns the Israelites that they should not be defiled by abominations, as the Canaanites were, lest the earth vomit them forth, as it vomited forth the nations which inhabited those places. And Deuteronomy 8:19–20 threatens them most explicitly with total ruin. For it says העדותי בכם היום כי אבד תאבדון כגוים אשר יהוה מאבד מפניכם כן תאבדון
30 *I declare to you this day, that you will perish without exception; like the nations which God made perish from your presence, so you will perish.* Similarly we find other passages in the Law which indicate explicitly that God did not choose the Hebrew nation unconditionally, nor to eternity.

[III/56] [51] So if the Prophets predicted a new and eternal covenant of the knowledge, love, and grace of God, it is easily proven that this was promised only to the pious. For in the chapter of Ezekiel we have just cited, it is said²¹ explicitly that God will separate the rebels and transgressors from them, and in Zephaniah 3:12–13,²² that God will remove the proud from the midst [of the people of Israel] and will let 5 the poor survive. Because this choice concerns true virtue, we must not think it was promised only to the pious among the Jews, the others being excluded. Rather we must believe that the true gentile Prophets—whom we have shown that all nations had—promised the same thing to the faithful of their Nations, and comforted them with it. [52]
10 So this eternal covenant of the knowledge and love of God is universal. [The universality of the covenant] is also established with the utmost clarity by Zephaniah 3:10–11. So we must admit no difference in this matter between the Jews and the nations, nor is there any other election peculiar to them, beyond what we have already shown.

Granted, when the Prophets speak about this election, which con- 15 cerns only true virtue, they mix in many things about sacrifices and other ceremonies, and about the rebuilding of the Temple and the City. But that's because, as was the custom in prophecy, and its nature, they wanted to explain spiritual matters in figurative expressions. That way they would at the same time indicate to the Jews, whose Prophets they were, that the restoration of the state and of the Temple was to be

20. The reference is probably to iii, 23–24.

21. God is presented as saying this in Ezek. 20:38.

22. As the verses are normally divided now, the reference should be to verses 11–12. Once again it is God who is reported as saying this.

expected in the time of Cyrus. [53] So today the Jews have absolutely
 20 nothing which they could attribute to themselves beyond all the Nations.

It's true also that they have survived for many years, in spite of being scattered and without a state. But that is nothing to wonder at, after they separated themselves so from all the nations that they have drawn the hatred of all men against themselves, not only by having external customs contrary to the customs of the other nations, but also by the sign of circumcision, which they maintain most scrupulously.²³

25 Moreover, experience has already taught that the hatred of the Nations has done much to preserve them. [54] Previously, when the King of Spain compelled the Jews either to accept the Religion of the Kingdom or to go into exile, a great many Jews accepted the Religion of the priests. But because all the privileges of native Spaniards were
 30 granted to those who accepted that religion, and they were thought worthy of all honors, they immediately mixed themselves with the Spaniards. As a result, after a little while no traces of them remained, nor any memory. Just the opposite happened to those whom the King of Portugal compelled to accept the religion of his state. Although they converted to that religion, they always lived separated from everyone
 [III/57] else, presumably because he declared them unworthy of all honors.²⁴

[55] I think the sign of circumcision is also so important in this matter that I am persuaded that this one thing will preserve this Nation to eternity. Indeed, if the foundations of their religion did not make their hearts unmanly, I would absolutely believe that some day, given the opportunity, they would set up their state again, and God would
 5 choose them anew. That's how changeable human affairs are.

[56] We have another excellent example of [the importance of a distinguishing mark in preserving national identity] in the Chinese. They have most scrupulously kept a kind of tail on their head, by which they separate themselves from everyone else. Thus separated, they have preserved themselves for so many thousands of years that they far surpass
 10 all other nations in antiquity. They have not always remained in charge

23. Cf. Tacitus on the history of the Jews (*Histories* V, 2–5).

24. On the history of the persecutions of the Jews on the Iberian peninsula, see Roth 1947 and Kamen 1997. Roth thinks there was more assimilation in Spain because when Ferdinand forced the Jews to choose between baptism and exile, the more devout Jews fled to Portugal; those who remained were the less committed. But Spinoza is mistaken in saying that in Spain the *conversos*, or “new Christians,” were thought worthy of all honors. As Méchoulan 1984 points out, the purity of blood legislation there made a significant distinction between them and “old Christians.” And as he also notes, it's surprising that Spinoza makes this mistake, since he should have known about the discrimination against them, if not from his contact with Spanish refugees in the Netherlands, then from one of the stories in Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*, which he had in his library. For a detailed account of the cult of *limpieza del sangre*, see Kamen 1997, ch. 11.

of their state; but they have regained it when it was lost. Doubtless they will regain it again, when the hearts of the Tartars begin to grow feeble from the negligence and extravagant living of wealth.

[57] Finally, if anyone wants to maintain, for this or some other reason, that God has chosen the Jews to eternity, I won't resist that, 15 provided he maintains that—whether this election is for a time or eternal—insofar as it is peculiar to the Jews, it concerns only their state and the advantages of the body. This is the only thing which can distinguish one Nation from another. In intellect and true virtue no nation is distinguished from any other; so in these matters God has not chosen one in preference to the others.

[III/57]

CHAPTER IV *Of the Divine Law*

[1] The word *law*, taken without qualification,¹ means that according to which each individual, or all or some members of the same species, act 25 in one and the same fixed and determinate way. This depends either on a necessity of nature or on a human decision. A law which depends on a necessity of nature is one which follows necessarily from the very nature *or* definition of a thing. One which depends on a human decision, and which is more properly called legislation, is one which men prescribe for themselves and others, for the sake of living more safely 30 and conveniently, or for some other causes.

[2] For example, it is a universal law of all bodies, which follows from a necessity of nature, that a body which strikes against another

1. I take it that here Spinoza is offering a definition of “law” in the most general sense of that term, which covers both the two kinds of law he is about to distinguish: descriptive laws, true in virtue of natural necessity, and prescriptive laws, valid because of human decisions. The laws of nature (of physics and of psychology) exemplify the first kind of laws; the laws of human societies, which establish principles according to which men agree to live, exemplify the second. In iv, 5, Spinoza seems to privilege the second kind of law, saying that this is what men commonly mean by the term, that the term “law” is applied only figuratively to laws of the first kind, and that the term “law” seems to need to be defined more particularly, as a principle of living men prescribe to themselves. But I agree with Rutherford 2010 that the first type of law is more basic, in that the necessary laws of human nature explain why men prescribe to themselves the laws they do. If Spinoza gives preference in §5 to the definition of laws as prescriptions, I think that is primarily because that is the sense of “law” which is most relevant to this chapter. But in Chapter VI, it is the definition of laws as statements of natural necessity which will be most relevant.

[III/58] lesser body loses as much of its motion as it communicates to the other body.² Similarly, it is a law which necessarily follows from human nature that when a man recalls one thing, he immediately recalls another like it, or one he had perceived together with the first thing. But [the law] that men should yield, or be compelled to yield, the right they have
5 from nature, and bind themselves to a fixed way of living, depends on a human decision.

[3] Though I grant, without reservation, that everything is determined by the universal laws of nature to exist and produce effects in a fixed and determinate way, nevertheless I have two reasons for saying that laws of this second kind depend on a decision of men. First,
10 because insofar as man is a part of nature, he constitutes part of the power of nature. So the things which follow from the necessity of human nature—i.e., from nature itself insofar as we conceive it to be determinate through human nature—still follow, even though by necessity, from human power.

That's why we can say quite properly that the enactment of those
15 laws depends on a decision of men: it depends mainly on the power of the human mind, but in such a way that the human mind, insofar as it perceives things as either true or false, can be conceived quite clearly without these laws [that depend on a human decision], although it cannot be conceived without a necessary law, as we have just defined it.

[4] Second, I have also said that these laws depend on a human decision
20 because we ought to define and explain things through their proximate causes. That universal consideration concerning fate and the connection of causes cannot help us to form and order our thoughts concerning particular things.

Furthermore, we are completely ignorant of the order and connection
25 of things itself, i.e., of how things are really ordered and connected. So for practical purposes it is better, indeed necessary, to consider things as possible. These remarks will suffice concerning *law*, taken without qualification.

[5] But since the word *law* seems to be applied figuratively to natural
30 things, and commonly nothing is understood by law but a command which men can either carry out or neglect—since law confines human power under certain limits, beyond which that power extends, and does not command anything beyond human powers—for that reason Law

2. This is roughly Descartes' third law of motion. Cf. his *Principles of Philosophy* II, 40.

seems to need to be defined more particularly: that it is a principle of living man prescribes to himself or to others for some end.

[6] Nevertheless, since the true end of laws is usually evident only
 [III/59] to a few, and since most men are almost incapable of perceiving it, and do anything but live according to reason, legislators, to confine all men equally, have wisely established another end, very different from the one which necessarily follows from the nature of laws: they promise those
 5 who support the laws what the common people most love, and they threaten those who would break the laws with what they most fear. In this way they have tried, as far as they could, to restrain the common people, as you might rein in a horse.

[7] That's why law is generally taken to be a principle of living prescribed to men by the command of others,³ and why those who
 10 obey the laws are said to live under the law, and seem to be slaves. And really, whoever gives each one his due because he fears the gallows does act according to the command of another and is coerced by evil. He cannot be called just. But the person who gives to each his due because he knows the true reason for the laws and their necessity, that
 15 person acts from a constant heart, and by his own decision, not that of another. So he deserves to be called just.⁴

[8] I think Paul also wanted to teach this when he said that those who live under the law could not be justified by the law [Romans 3:19–20]. For justice is commonly defined as a constant and perpetual will to
 20 give to everyone his due.⁵ So Solomon says in Proverbs 21:15 that *the Just man rejoices when a Judgment is made, but the unjust are terrified*.⁶

[9] Since, therefore, Law is nothing but a principle of living which men prescribe to themselves or to others for some end, it seems that Law must be distinguished into human and divine. By human law I understand a principle of living which serves only to protect life and
 25 the republic; by a divine law, one which aims only at the supreme good, i.e., the true knowledge and love of God. I call this law divine because of the nature of the supreme good, which I shall show here as briefly and clearly as I can.

[10] If we really want to seek our advantage, then since the intel-
 30 lect is the better part of us, we should certainly strive above all to

3. Cf. Hobbes, DC vi, 9.

4. Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan* xv, 10.

5. As Hobbes notes (*Leviathan* xv, 3), this is the common scholastic definition of justice, defended, for example, by Aquinas, ST II-IIae, qu. lviii, art. 1. In DC iii, 5, Hobbes also gives an account of what it is for a man to be just which is like (but not identical with) Spinoza's.

6. In x, 4, Spinoza will implicitly reject the attribution of Proverbs to Solomon.

perfect it as much as we can. For our supreme good must consist in the perfection of the intellect. Next, because nothing can either be or be conceived without God, and because we can doubt everything so long as we have no clear and distinct idea of God, all our knowledge, and the certainty which really removes all doubt, depends only on the knowledge of God. It follows that our supreme good and perfection depend only on the knowledge of God, etc.

[11] Next, since nothing can be or be conceived without God, it is certain that all things in nature involve and express the concept of God, in proportion to their essence and perfection. Hence the more we know natural things, the greater and more perfect is the knowledge of God we acquire—or, since knowledge of an effect through its cause is nothing but knowing some property of the cause, the more we know natural things, the more perfectly we know God's essence, which is the cause of all things. [12] So all our knowledge, i.e., our supreme good, not only depends on the knowledge of God, but consists entirely in it.

That knowledge of God is our supreme good also follows from the fact that a man is more perfect in proportion to the nature and perfection of the thing which he loves before all others, and conversely. Therefore, the man who is necessarily the most perfect and who participates most in supreme blessedness is the one who loves above all else the intellectual knowledge of God, the most perfect being, and takes the greatest pleasure in that knowledge. Our supreme good, then, and our blessedness come back to this: the knowledge and love of God.

[13] We can call the means required by this end of all human actions—i.e., God, insofar as his idea is in us—God's commands, because God himself, insofar as he exists in our mind, prescribes them to us, as it were. So the principle of living which aims at this end is quite properly called a Divine law. But what these means are, and what principle of living this end requires, and how the foundations of the best republic and the principle of living among men follow from this,⁷ these matters all pertain to a universal Ethics. Here I shall proceed to treat only of the divine law in general.

[14] Since, then, the love of God is man's highest happiness and blessedness, and the ultimate end and object of all human actions, the only one who follows the divine law is the one who devotes himself to loving God, not from fear of punishment, nor from love for another thing, such as pleasures or reputation, etc., but only because he knows God, *or* because he knows that the knowledge and love of God is the highest good.

7. Reading *binc* for *bunc* here (following a suggestion of Wernham's).

[15] So the main point of the divine law, and its highest precept,
 [III/61] is to love God as the highest good, as we have said, not from fear of
 some punishment or penalty, nor from love of some other thing, in
 which we desire to take pleasure. For the idea of God dictates this:
 that God is our supreme good, *or* that the knowledge and love of God
 5 is the ultimate end toward which all our actions ought to be directed.⁸

[16] In spite of this, the man of the flesh⁹ cannot understand these
 things. To him they seem hollow, because he has too meager a knowl-
 edge of God, and finds nothing in this highest good to touch or eat
 or affect the flesh, which is what gives him his greatest pleasure. This
 good consists only in contemplation and in a pure mind. But those who
 10 know that they have nothing more excellent than the intellect and a
 healthy mind will doubtless judge these things very solid.

[17] We have explained, therefore, what the divine law consists in
 above all, and what laws are human, viz. all those which aim at something
 other [than the knowledge of God]—unless they have been enacted by
 revelation. For as we have shown above, that is another reason why we
 15 may refer things to God. It's in this sense that the law of Moses, although
 not universal, but accommodated for the most part to the mentality
 and special preservation of one people, can still be called God's Law,
or divine Law. For we believe it was enacted by the Prophetic light.

20 [18] If now we attend to the Nature of natural divine law, as we
 have just explained it, we shall see:

I. that it is universal, *or* common to all men,

for we have deduced it from universal human nature; and

II. that it does not require faith in historical narratives, no matter what, in
 the end, those narratives are.¹⁰

For since this natural divine law is understood simply by the con-
 25 sideration of human nature, it is certain that we can conceive it just as
 much in Adam as in any other man, just as much in a man who lives
 among others as in a man who lives a solitary life.

[19] Furthermore, faith in historical narratives, no matter how
 certain that faith may be, cannot give us any knowledge of God. So
 30 it also cannot give us the love of God. For love of God arises from

8. A central theme in Spinoza, to which he will return in the last half of Part V of the *Ethics*.

9. *Homo carnalis*. An allusion to St. Paul. Cf. Romans (6:19, 7:5, 18, 25) or 1 Cor. 3:1–3.

10. Spinoza does not spell out the implications of this position, but on its face it excludes a doctrine common in Christianity, that belief in certain historical facts about Jesus—that he was the son of God, whose sacrificial death on the cross redeemed mankind from sin—is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for salvation. Cf. John 3:16–18.

knowledge of him, and knowledge of God must be drawn from common notions certain and known through themselves. So it is far from true that faith in historical narratives is necessary for us to attain our supreme good.

Nevertheless, though faith in historical narratives cannot give us the knowledge and love of God, we do not deny that reading them is very
[III/62] useful in relation to civil life. For the more we have observed and the better we know the customs and character of men—which can best be known from their actions—the more cautiously we will be able to live among them and the better we will be able to accommodate our actions
5 and lives to their mentality, as much as reason allows.

[20] [Again, if we attend to the nature of natural divine law], we see

III. that it does not require ceremonies, i.e., actions which in themselves are indifferent, and are called good only by institution, or which represent some good necessary for salvation, or, if you prefer, actions whose reason surpasses man's power of understanding.

10 For the natural light requires nothing that light itself does not reach, but only what can indicate to us very clearly a good, *or* a means to our blessedness.¹¹ The things which are good only by command and institution, or because they are representations of some good, cannot perfect our intellect and are nothing but mere shadows. They cannot
15 be counted among the actions which are, as it were, the offspring or fruits of the intellect and of a healthy mind. But there is no need to show this more fully here.

[21] Finally, [if we attend to the nature of natural divine law] we see

IV. that the highest reward for observing the divine law is the law itself, viz. to know God and to love him from true freedom and with a whole and
20 constant heart, whereas the penalty for not observing it is the privation of these things and bondage to the flesh, *or* an inconstant and vacillating heart.

[22] With these things noted, we must now ask:

(i) whether, by the natural light, we can conceive God as a lawgiver, or prince prescribing laws to men?¹²

(ii) what Sacred Scripture teaches concerning this natural light and natural law?

11. This formula provides an interesting gloss on the definition of “good” in E IV D1, answering a question that definition does not address: For what end is the good useful to us?

12. For an alternate version of this argument, see KV II, xxiv, 4 (Volume I, p. 142). See also E II P3S, ADN. XXXIV at xvi, 53 (III/198/13), and TP ii, 22.

(iii) to what end ceremonies were formerly instituted? and finally,

- 25 (iv) why it matters whether we know the sacred historical narratives and believe in them?

I shall treat the first two of these questions in this chapter [§§23–37 and 38–50], and the last two in the next chapter [§§2–34 and 35–50].

[23] We can easily deduce what we must maintain in answer to the first question from the nature of God's will, which is distinguished from his intellect only in relation to our reason. That is, in themselves God's
30 will and God's intellect are really one and the same; they are distinguished only in relation to the thoughts we form about God's intellect.¹³

[24] For example, when we attend only to the fact that the nature of a triangle is contained in the divine nature from eternity, as an eternal truth, then we say that God has the idea of the triangle, *or* understands
[III/63] the nature of the triangle. But afterward we may attend to the fact that the nature of the triangle is contained in the divine nature solely from the necessity of the divine nature, and not from the necessity of the essence and nature of the triangle—indeed, that the necessity of the essence and properties of the triangle, insofar as they too are conceived
5 as eternal truths, depends only on the necessity of the divine nature and intellect, and not on the nature of the triangle. When we do that, then the same thing we called God's intellect we call God's will *or* decree.

[25] So in relation to God we affirm one and the same thing when we say that from eternity God decreed and willed that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, *or* [when we say] that God
10 understood this. From this it follows that God's affirmations and denials always involve eternal necessity *or* truth.¹⁴

[26] So, for example, if God said to Adam that he willed him not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [Genesis 2:17], it would imply a contradiction for Adam to be able to eat of that tree. So
15 it would be impossible for him to eat of it. That divine decree would have had to involve eternal necessity and truth. But since Scripture nevertheless relates that God did tell Adam not to eat of the tree, and that Adam nevertheless ate of the tree, we must say that God only

13. This is a common medieval doctrine—cf. Maimonides *Guide* I, 53; Aquinas, ST I, 3—also advocated by Descartes. See his letter to Mersenne, 6 May 1630 (where the formulation nevertheless seems to give a certain priority to God's will). But since Spinoza's *Ethics* denies both will and intellect to God (E I P31), his argument here may be *ad hominem*.

14. ALM note that this claim will reappear in xix, 18, where it becomes a ground for claiming that the teachings of religion do not acquire the force of a command immediately from God, but only from the civil sovereign. Cf. TP ii, 22, where Spinoza explains a sense in which man can act contrary to God's decrees.

revealed to Adam the evil which would necessarily befall him if he ate of that tree, but not the necessity of that evil's following.¹⁵

[27] That's how it happened that Adam perceived that revelation,
 20 not as an eternal and necessary truth, but as a law, i.e., as something
 instituted, which profit or loss follows, not from the necessity and nature
 of the action performed, but solely from the pleasure and absolute
 25 command of some Prince. So that revelation was a law, and God, as it
 were, a lawgiver or Prince, only in relation to Adam, and because of a
 defect in his knowledge.

[28] That's also why the Decalogue was a law only in relation to the
 Hebrews, because of a defect in their knowledge. For since they did not
 know God's existence as an eternal truth, they had to perceive as a law
 30 what was revealed to them in the Decalogue: that God exists and that
 he alone is to be worshipped. If God had spoken to them immediately,
 without using any corporeal means, they would have perceived this, not
 as a law, but as an eternal truth.

[29] What we say about the Israelites and Adam must also be said
 [III/64] about all the Prophets who wrote laws in the name of God: they did
 not perceive God's decrees adequately, as eternal truths. For example, we
 must say even of Moses himself that by revelation, or from the founda-
 tions revealed to him, he perceived the way the people of Israel could
 5 best be united in a certain region of the world, and could form a whole
 social order, *or* set up a state. He also perceived the way that people
 could best be compelled to obedience. But he did not perceive, and it
 was not revealed to him, that that way is best—or even that the goal

15. I take Spinoza's point in this paragraph to be that, contrary to the usual way of reading Gen. 2:15-17, we should not interpret that passage as reporting that God *commanded* Adam not to eat of the tree, i.e., expressing a volition that Adam not eat from the tree. Spinoza thinks it involves a contradiction for an omnipotent being to command one of his creatures not to do something which the creature then does. On a proper understanding of omnipotence, it is impossible for an omnipotent being to will something – something logically possible, at least – which does not happen. So if God really had commanded Adam not to eat from the tree, Adam would not have eaten its fruit.

The passage in Genesis does contain a form of words naturally understood as expressing an imperative: e.g., (in the New JPS translation) "you must not eat of the tree." But imperatives do not always express commands; sometimes they express counsel. (Cf. Hobbes, DCv, iv, 1; *Leviathan* xxv, 1-3) The fact that God does not simply tell Adam to refrain, relying only on that's being his will, but offers a reason for refraining which involves a benefit to Adam ("in the day that you eat of it, you shall die"), arguably makes this counsel rather than command. Spinoza's language in l. 17 – *Scriptura . . . narrat, Deum id Adamo praecepisse* – admits both these possibilities, since a *praeceptum* can be either advice or an order. Of course, laws are normally accompanied by penalties which must be paid if they are broken, but those penalties normally depend on the contingent will of the lawmaker, not natural necessity.

Note that when Spinoza returns to this topic in §§38–39, he offers a different reading, and expresses doubt that he has understood the intention of the writer of Genesis.

they were aiming at would necessarily follow from the general obedience of the people in such a region of the world. [30] So he perceived all these things, not as eternal truths, but as precepts and institutions, and he prescribed them as laws of God. That's why he imagined God as a ruler, a lawgiver, a king, as compassionate, just, etc., when all these things are attributes only of human nature, and ought to be removed entirely from the divine nature.¹⁶

But I say this only about the Prophets, who wrote laws in the name of God, and not about Christ. [31] For however much Christ too may seem to have written laws in the name of God, nevertheless we must think that he perceived things truly and adequately. Christ was not so much a Prophet as the mouth of God. As we have shown in Chapter 1, God revealed certain things to the human race through the mind of Christ, as previously he had revealed them through Angels, i.e., through a created voice, visions, etc. It would be as contrary to reason to maintain that God accommodated his revelations to Christ's opinions as to maintain that previously, to communicate the things to be revealed to his prophets, God accommodated his revelations to the angels' opinions, i.e., those of a created voice and of visions. No one could maintain anything more absurd than that—particularly since Christ was sent to teach, not only the Jews, but the whole human race. So it was not enough for him to have a mind accommodated only to the opinions of the Jews; [he needed a mind accommodated] to the opinions and teachings universal to the human race, i.e., to common and true notions.¹⁷

[32] And of course, from the fact that God revealed himself immediately to Christ, *or* to his mind—and not, as he did to the Prophets, through words and images—the only thing we can understand is that Christ perceived truly, *or* understood, the things revealed. For what is perceived with a pure mind, without words and images, is understood.

[III/65] Christ, therefore, perceived the things revealed truly and adequately.

[33] If he ever prescribed them as laws, he did this because of the people's ignorance and stubbornness. So in this respect he acted in place of God, because he accommodated himself to the mentality of the people. That's why, although he spoke somewhat more clearly than

16. Spinoza reiterates his opposition to anthropomorphic conceptions of God. As ALM note, the term "attribute" is not used here in the technical sense it has in the *Ethics*. Cf. KV I, vii.

17. But in i, 22, Spinoza did seem to attribute supernatural knowledge to Christ.

the other Prophets, he still taught these revelations obscurely, and quite frequently through parables, especially when he was speaking to those to whom it was not yet given to understand the kingdom of heaven (see Matthew 13:10 etc.).¹⁸ [34] But doubtless when he was speaking to those to whom it was given to know the mysteries of the heavens, 10 he taught things as eternal truths and did not prescribe them as laws. In this way he freed them from bondage to the law. Nevertheless, he [didn't abolish the law for them, but] confirmed and established it more firmly, and wrote it thoroughly in their hearts.

Paul also seems to teach this in certain passages. See Romans 7:6 15 and 3:28. [35] Still, he too did not wish to speak openly, but as he says (Romans 3:5 and 6:19) he speaks in a human manner. He says this explicitly when he calls God just. Doubtless it is also because of the weakness of the flesh that he ascribes mercy, grace, anger, etc., to God, and accommodates his words to the mentality of ordinary people, *or* 20 (as he also says in 1 Cor. 3:1–2) of men of the flesh.

[36] For Romans 9:18 teaches without reservation that God's anger and mercy do not depend on human works, but only on God's calling, i.e., on his will; next, Romans 3:28 teaches that no one becomes just 25 by the works of the law, but by faith alone, by which, of course, he understands nothing but a full consent of the heart; finally, Romans 8:9 teaches that no one becomes blessed unless he has in himself the mind of Christ, by which he perceives God's laws as eternal truths.

[37] From this we conclude

[i] that it is only because of the common people's power of understanding and a defect in their knowledge¹⁹ that God is described as a lawgiver or 30 prince, and called just, merciful, etc.;

[ii] that God really acts and guides all things only from the necessity of his own nature and perfection; and finally,

[iii] that his decrees and volitions are eternal truths, and always involve necessity.

That is what I had decided to explain and show under the first [of the four headings enumerated in §22].

[III/66] [38] Let us turn then to the second question, and survey Holy Scripture to see what it teaches concerning the natural light and this

18. The passage cited is one which suggests that Jesus had an esoteric teaching intended to be understood only by the few. This seems difficult to reconcile with Spinoza's earlier claim that Christ was sent to teach the whole human race. Cf. iii, 45; iv, 31.

19. Reading *cognitionis* (with Wernham), in preference to Gebhardt's *cogitationis*. Cf. III/63/25–29. Glazemaker has *kennis*.

divine law. The first thing which strikes us is the story²⁰ of the first man, where it is related that God told Adam not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [Genesis 2:17]. This seems to mean that God told Adam to do and seek the good for the sake of the good, and not insofar as it is contrary to the evil, i.e., that he should seek the good from love of the good, and not from fear of evil.²¹ For as we've already shown,²² he who does good from a true knowledge and love of the good acts freely and with a constant heart, whereas he who acts from fear of evil is compelled by evil, acts like a slave, and lives under the command of another.

[39] And so this one thing which God told²³ Adam to do contains the whole divine natural law, and agrees absolutely with the dictate of the natural light. It would not be difficult to explain that whole story, or parable, of the first man from this foundation. But I prefer to put this to one side, not only because I cannot be absolutely certain that my explanation agrees with the writer's intention, but also because most people will not grant that this story is a parable, but maintain without qualification that it is a simple record of fact.

[40] It will be better, therefore, to call attention to other passages in Scripture, especially those which were composed by one who spoke from the power of the natural light, in which he surpassed all the other wise men of his age, and whose maxims the people have embraced as being as holy as those of the Prophets. I mean Solomon, who is commended in the sacred writings, not so much for his Prophecy and piety, as for his prudence and wisdom.

[41] In his Proverbs Solomon calls the human understanding the fountain of true life and makes misfortune consist only in foolishness. Thus he says in 16:22 מְקוֹר חַיִּים שָׂכַל בְּעַלְיוֹ וּמוֹסֵר אוֹיְלִים אֹלֶת *Understanding is a fountain of life to its lord,^{24*} and the punishment of fools is folly.*²⁵ It

20. Gebhardt (V, 33) notes various authors who interpreted the story of the fall as a parable (e.g., Philo, *Allegory of the Laws* I, 100–108 [in Philo, *Works*]; Maimonides *Guide* II, 3), and others who interpreted it as historical (e.g., Ibn Ezra and Calvin).

21. For Spinoza's other discussions of the fall, E IV P68S, V P42, Letter 19 (IV/90), and TP ii, 6.

22. Perhaps the reference is to ii, 46–47, or iii, 45, or iv, 15.

23. Accepting Wernham's suggestion that we should read *praecepit*.

24. *This is a Hebraism. He who has some thing or contains it in his nature is called the Lord of that thing. Thus a bird is called in Hebrew the Lord of wings, because it has wings. One who understands is called the Lord of the intellect, because he has understanding.

25. Bennett notes that the Vulgate and the King James Version render this verse: "the instruction of fools is folly." The ambiguity of the Hebrew (מוֹסֵר) makes this a possible translation, with the idea that it is foolish to listen to what fools teach. But more modern translations (e.g., the NRSV, the NJPS) tend to translate this verse as Spinoza does, with the idea that foolish people do foolish things, and that the foolishness of their behavior

should be noted here that in Hebrew true life is understood when *life* is used without qualification, as is evident from Deuteronomy 30:19. Therefore, he made the fruit of understanding consist only in true life, and punishment only in the privation of understanding. This agrees
 30 completely with what we have noted above [III/62/17–21] concerning the natural divine law. Moreover, this same wise man teaches expressly that this fountain of life (*or*, as we have also shown, understanding alone)
 [III/67] prescribes laws to the wise. For he says in Proverbs 13:14 מִקֹּר חָכָם תּוֹרַת חַיִּים *The Law*²⁶ *of the wise (is) the fountain of life*, i.e., as is evident from the text just adduced, understanding [is the fountain of life].

[42] Again, in 3:13 he teaches very explicitly that understanding makes man blessed and happy, and gives him true peace of mind. For
 5 he says אִשְׁרֵי אָדָם מִצֵּא חֲכָמָה וּבֶן אָדָם יִפְיֶק תְּבוּנָה וְגו' אֶרֶךְ יָמִים בְּיָמֵינָהּ בְּשִׂמְחָהּ *Blessed is the man who has found 'knowledge, and the son of the man who has brought forth understanding.* The reason for this (as he continues in vv. 16–17) is that *it gives length of days*^{28*} *directly, and indirectly wealth and honor; its ways* (i.e., those which
 10 'knowledge indicates) *are pleasant, and all its paths are peace.* According to Solomon only the wise live with a constant and peaceful heart, unlike the impious, whose heart vacillates with opposite affects, to such an extent that (as Isaiah too says in 57:20) they have neither peace nor rest.

[43] Finally, what we must note most in these Proverbs of Solomon
 15 are those in the second chapter, which confirm our opinion as clearly as possible. For 2:3 begins thus:

כִּי אִם לְבִינָה תִקְרָא לְתְבוּנָה תִתֵּן קוֹלְךָ וְגו' אִז תִּבִּין יְהוָה וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים תִּמְצָא כִּי יְהוָה
 20 *voice for understanding, etc., then you will understand the fear of God, and you will find the 'knowledge* (or rather, love, for the word יָדַע *yadah* means both these things) *of God; for (NB) God grants wisdom, from his mouth 'knowledge and prudence* (flow out).

[44] By these words he indicates very clearly (i) that only wisdom, *or* understanding teaches us to fear God wisely, i.e., to worship God
 25 with true religion; and he teaches (ii) that wisdom and 'knowledge flow from the mouth of God, and that God grants them. This is what we ourselves have shown above,²⁹ viz. that our understanding and our

is a sufficient punishment for their folly. Spinoza will return to this verse at the end of the chapter [§§49–50], and gloss it significantly.

26. So Spinoza translates תּוֹרָה here, and so did the KJV. More recent translations prefer *teaching* (NRSV) or *instruction* (NJPS).

27. Where Spinoza has וּבֶן אָדָם, MT has simply אָדָם.

28. *A Hebraism, which signifies nothing but life.

29. Cf. i, 4–5.

'knowledge depend only on the idea *or* knowledge of God, arise only from it, and are perfected only by it.

- [45] He proceeds next (in 2:9) to teach very explicitly that this
 30 'knowledge contains the true Ethics and Politics and that they are deduced from it:³⁰

III/68] טוב וזדק ומשפט ומשרים כל מעגל טוב *then you will understand Justice, and Judgment, and the right ways, (and) every good path.* Not content with that, he continues: תבוא חכמה בלכך ודעת לנפשך ינעם מזמה תשמור עליך תבונה *כי תבוא חכמה בלכך ודעת לנפשך ינעם מזמה תשמור עליך תבונה when 'knowledge shall enter into your heart, and wisdom shall be pleasant to you, then your providence³¹* will watch over you and prudence will guard you.*

- [46] All these things are entirely consistent with natural 'knowledge. For that knowledge teaches Ethics and true excellence, after we have acquired knowledge of things and tasted the excellence of 'knowledge.
 5 So Solomon agrees that the happiness and peace of one who cultivates the natural understanding does not depend on the rule of fortune (i.e., on God's external aid), but chiefly on his internal excellence (i.e., on God's internal aid), because he preserves himself chiefly by being watchful, by acting, and by planning well.
 10 [47] Finally, we must not by any means pass over that passage in Paul (Romans 1:20) where he says (as Tremellius³² translates from the Syriac text): *for from the foundations of the world, God's bidden things are visible in his creatures through the understanding, and his power and divinity, which are to eternity; so they are without escape.*³³ [48] By this he indicates clearly
 15 enough that everyone, by the natural light, clearly understands God's power and eternal divinity, from which he can know and deduce what he ought to pursue and what he ought to flee. Hence he concludes that no one has any escape and none can be excused by their ignorance, as they certainly could be, if he were speaking of the supernatural light,
 20 and of the fleshly passion of Christ and his resurrection etc. [49] That's

30. Wernham suggests reading *ex ea eisdem deduci*. Whether the text needs emendation or not, it certainly must be translated as if that is what we had.

31. *Strictly speaking, מזמה *mezima* means thought, deliberation, and vigilance.

32. On Tremellius, see the annotation at III/3.

33. In the NRSV the passage from Romans reads: "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse." The prima facie difference between this more familiar translation and Tremellius's version may cause some to doubt whether Spinoza may have been misled in his understanding of Paul by a bad translation. But it's evident from his discussion of this text that he regards Tremellius's *sine effugio* (without escape) as entailing that the people so characterized are inexcusable. A more serious question is whether Spinoza's reading of Romans here is consistent with the position he ascribes to Paul in xvi, 6 and 53.

why he continues a bit further on (1:24) as follows: *for this reason God gave them up to the unclean lusts of their hearts etc.* to the end of the chapter, in verses which describe the vices of ignorance, and expound them as punishments for ignorance.

This agrees completely with that Proverb of Solomon we've already
 25 cited, 16:22, according to which ומוסר אוילים אולת *the punishment of fools is foolishness*. [50] So it's no wonder that Paul says that evildoers are inexcusable. For as each one sows, so shall he reap [Galatians 6:7]. From evil deeds evils necessarily follow, unless they are wisely corrected, and from good deeds, goods necessarily follow, if they are accompanied by constancy of heart.³⁴ Scripture, therefore, commends, without reser-
 30 vation, both the natural light and the natural divine law. And with this I have finished the things I had proposed to treat in this chapter.

[III/69]

CHAPTER V

*The Reason why ceremonies were instituted,
 and on faith in historical narratives,
 for what reason and for whom it is necessary*

[1] In the preceding Chapter we have shown that the divine law, which
 5 renders men truly blessed, and teaches a true life, is universal to all men. We have deduced this from human nature in such a way that we must think that it itself is innate to, and as it were, written in the human mind.
 [2] But ceremonies—at least those treated in the Old Testament—were instituted only for the Hebrews, and were so adapted to their state that
 10 for the most part they could be performed only by the whole society, not by each person. So it's certain that they do not pertain to the divine law, and make no contribution to blessedness and virtue, but concern only the election of the Hebrews—i.e., as we have shown in Ch. 3 [§§6–21],
 15 only the temporal happiness of the body and the peace of the state. For that reason, they could be useful only so long as their state lasted.

[3] Therefore, if the Old Testament referred those ceremonies to the law of God, that was only because they were instituted by revelation or from revealed foundations. But because most Theologians do not

34. Note the qualifications Spinoza attaches to the doctrine that as we sow, so shall we reap. The generalizations that good deeds lead to good results, and evil deeds to bad results, hold only subject to certain conditions.

20 value reason highly, even when it is very solid, I want to prove what we have just shown by the authority of Scripture as well. Then, for greater lucidity, I want to show why and how the ceremonies served to stabilize and preserve the Jewish state.

[4] [As for the first point,] Isaiah teaches nothing more clearly than that the divine law, taken without qualification, means that universal
25 law which consists in the true manner of living, but not in ceremonies. For when the Prophet calls his nation to hear the divine Law from him (Isaiah 1:10), he first excludes from it all kinds of sacrifices, and then all festivals. Only then does he teach the law itself (see vv. 16–17),
30 summing it up briefly as consisting in the purification of the heart, in the performance (*or* habitual practice) of virtue (*or* of good actions), and finally, in giving aid to the poor.¹

[5] No less clear is the testimony of Psalm 40:7, 9,² for here the Psalmist addresses God:

[III/70] וְכַבֵּד וּמָנַח לֹא חִפְצָה אֲזֵנִים כִּרִית לִי עוֹלָה וְחַטָּאָה לֹא שָׁאַלְתָּ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן אֱלֹהֵי חִפְצָתִי
וְתוֹרַתְךָ בְּתֶךְ מִעַי *you did not want sacrifice and offering, you have opened my ears;*³ **you did not ask for a burnt offering or an offering for sin; I have wanted to follow your will, my God; for your law is in my inmost parts.*

5 Therefore, he calls the law of God only that which is written in the inmost parts, or in the mind, and he excludes ceremonies from it. For they are good only by institution, and not by nature; so they are not written in minds. In addition to these there are still other passages in Scripture which testify to the same thing. But it's enough to have mentioned these two.

[6] [As for the second point,] Scripture itself also establishes that ceremonies contribute nothing to blessedness, but only concern the
10 temporal prosperity of the state. For it promises nothing in return for ceremonies except the advantages and pleasures of the body, and promises blessedness only in return for following the universal divine law. For in the five books commonly attributed to Moses⁴ nothing else is promised (as we have said above [iii, 19]) than this temporal

1. Isa. 1:16–17 reads: “Wash yourselves clean; put your evil doings away from my sight. Cease to do evil; learn to do good. Devote yourself to justice; aid the wronged; uphold the rights of the orphan; defend the cause of the widow” (NJPS).

2. Spinoza uses the numbering of the Hebrew Bible for what in the English versions are vv. 6 and 8. The Hebrew which Spinoza translates here as *lex* (“law”), *torah*, can also be translated “teaching,” and is so translated in the NJPS translation.

3. *A phrase meaning perception.

4. The first hint, I think, that Spinoza will question the attribution of those books to Moses.

15 prosperity, i.e., honors *or* reputation, victories, wealth, pleasures and health.

[7] And although those five books contain, in addition to ceremonies, many precepts related to morals, nevertheless they do not contain those precepts as moral teachings, universal to all men, but as commands especially accommodated to the grasp and mentality of the Hebrew nation, and so as commands which concern only the advantage of the state. For example, Moses does not teach the Jews as a teacher or Prophet that they should not kill or steal, but commands these things as a lawgiver and prince. For he does not prove these teachings by reason, but adds
20 a penalty to the commands, which can and must vary according to the mentality of each nation, as experience has sufficiently taught.

[8] Similarly, the command not to commit adultery concerns only the advantage of the republic and the state. For if he had wanted to teach this as a moral teaching, which concerns not only the advantage of the republic, but also the peace of mind and true blessedness of
30 each person, he would not condemn only the external action, but also the consent of the mind itself, as Christ did, who taught only universal teachings (see Matthew 5:28).⁵ That's why Christ promises a spiritual reward, not, as Moses does, a corporeal one. [9] For as I've said,⁶ Christ
[III/71] was sent, not to preserve the state and to institute laws, but to teach the one universal law.

From this we easily understand that Christ did not at all repeal the law of Moses, since he didn't want to introduce any new laws into the republic, nor was he concerned about anything but teaching moral
5 lessons, and distinguishing them from the laws of the Republic. This was important to him mainly because of the ignorance of the Pharisees, who thought that one who lived blessedly was one who observed the legislation of the Republic, *or* the law of Moses, whereas that law, as we've said [iv, 29–30], was concerned only with the Republic, and did not serve so much to teach the Hebrews as to compel them.

10 [10] But let's return to our theme, and cite other passages in Scripture which promise nothing more than corporeal advantages in return for ceremonies, and blessedness only in return for adhering to the universal divine law. Among the Prophets no one taught this more clearly than Isaiah. For in ch. 58, after he has condemned hypocrisy, he commends

5. Matt. 5:28 reads: "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (NRSV). Sanders (1993, 201–4) has argued that we need to put the "idealistic perfectionism" of passages like this into context, noting that it seems to be localized in the gospel of Matthew, and to be inconsistent with the compassion toward human frailty found elsewhere in the teachings of Jesus.

6. I believe the reference is to iv, 31–34.

15 freedom and loving-kindness toward oneself and one's neighbor.⁷ In return for these he promises that

אז יבקע כשחר אורך וארוכתך מהרה תצמח והלך לפניך צדקך כבוד יהוה יאספך *then your light will burst forth like the dawn, and your health will blossom out immediately, and your justice will go before you, and the glory of God will gather^{8*} you etc.* [v. 8].

After this he commends the sabbath also, and in return for diligence 20 in observing it, he promises that

אז תתענג על יהוה והרכבתך על במותי ארץ והאכלתיך נחלת יעקב אביך כי פי יהוה דבר *then you will take pleasure^{9*} in God, and I shall make you ride^{10*} on the high places of the earth, and I shall make you eat the heritage of Jacob, your father, as the mouth of Yabweh has spoken* [v. 14].

We see, therefore, that in return for freedom and loving-kindness the 25 Prophet promises a sound mind in a sound body, and the glory of God even after death,¹¹ but that in return for ceremonies he promises nothing except the security of the state, prosperity and bodily good fortune.

[11] In Psalms 15 and 24 there is no mention of ceremonies, but only of moral teachings, because in those Psalms it is only a question of blessedness, and that alone is held out as an inducement, although

7. *hic enim cap. 58., postquam hypocrisin damnavit, libertatem, et charitatem erga se, et proximum commendat.* This sentence is puzzling, partly because of the reference to *libertas*. Totaro suggests that Spinoza may have in mind Isa. 58:6, which urges the people of Israel to free the workers they have oppressed. But she also suggests that *libertas* may have the broader meaning it had acquired by the seventeenth century, which includes what would classically have been called *liberalitas* (liberality or generosity). Cf. Isa. 58:7, with its call to the people of Israel to share their bread with the hungry, bring the homeless into their homes, and clothe the naked.

Also puzzling is the apparent injunction to love oneself (commending *charitas erga se*). Isaiah does not seem to think that the people suffer from a deficit of self-love, but that their self-love fails to motivate the behavior God really wants, not ritual, but care for others. We might propose taking the reflexive *se* to have reciprocal force, so that the injunction is to love one another. But then the reference to loving one's neighbor seems redundant.

8. *A Hebraism by which the time of death is meant. *To be gathered unto one's people* means to die. See Gen. 49:29, 33. [Spinoza is at odds with the major modern translations, which interpret the verb אסף here as meaning *to be one's rearguard*, and not, as Spinoza does, *to gather or collect* (with a reference to the custom of gathering a person's bones for burial with those of his ancestors). So the NJPS has for the last verse: "The presence of the LORD shall be your rearguard." The NRSV and NIV are similar. I owe this information to John Huddleston. Cf. Isa. 52:12, where the HCSB commentary suggests a contrast with the exodus.]

9. *This means *to take pleasure in honorably*, as is also said in Dutch: *met Godt en met eere* [with God and with honor].

10. *This means control, as to handle a horse by the reins.

11. So here Spinoza finds a reference to reward in the afterlife in the Hebrew Bible (though apparently he bases this on a misreading of Isaiah).

30 in metaphors. For it is certain that by the mount of God, and his tents,
and the inhabitation of these, the Psalmist understands blessedness and
[III/72] peace of mind, not the mount of Jerusalem or the tent of Moses.¹² For
no one inhabited these places, nor did anyone administer them, except
members of the tribe of Levi.

[12] Next, all the maxims of Solomon which I mentioned in the
preceding chapter promise true blessedness in return only for the
cultivation of understanding and wisdom. That is, they promise that
5 in this way we will at last understand the fear of God, and discover
the 'knowledge of God.

[13] But it's evident from Jeremiah that after the destruction of their
state the Hebrews are not bound to perform ceremonies. When he
has seen that the destruction of the city is at hand, and is predicting
it, he says *God loves only those who know and understand that he exercises*
10 *compassion, judgment, and justice in the world; and so hereafter only those*
who know these things are to be viewed as worthy of praise (see Jeremiah
9:23),¹³ as if to say that after the destruction of the city God requires
nothing special of the Jews, and that henceforth he will not ask of them
anything beyond the natural law which binds all mortals.

15 [14] The New Testament completely proves this. For as we have said,
it teaches only moral lessons, and promises the kingdom of heaven in
return for adherence to them. Moreover, after the Gospel began to be
preached also to other nations, who were bound by the legislation of
another Republic, the Apostles set aside ceremonies.

It's true that the Pharisees retained them, or at least many of them,
20 after they lost their state; but they did this more in a spirit of opposing
the Christians than to please God. [15] For after the first destruction of
the city, when they were led as captives to Babylon, because (so far as I
know) they were not then divided into sects, they immediately neglected
ceremonies. Indeed, they said good-bye to the whole law of Moses,
consigned the legislation of their country to oblivion, as completely
25 superfluous, and began to mix with the other nations. Ezra and Nehemiah
establish this more than adequately.¹⁴ So there is no doubt that after their
state was dissolved the Jews were no more bound by the law of Moses
than they were before their social order and Republic began. For before

12. See Ps. 15:1 and Ps. 24:3.

13. Though in italics in the text, this is more a paraphrase than a quote. The verse cited reads: "But only in this should one glory: in his earnest devotion to Me. For I the Lord act with kindness, justice and equity in the world; for in these I delight" (NJPS). The verses which follow reject the importance of physical circumcision, in favor of a circumcision of the heart.

14. See Ezra 9 and Neh. 13.

the exodus from Egypt, when they lived among other nations, they had
 30 no laws peculiar to themselves, and were not bound by any law, except
 natural law and, no doubt, the legislation of the Republic in which they
 were living (insofar as it was not contrary to divine natural law).

[16] As for the fact that the Patriarchs sacrificed to God, I think
 they did that to rouse their hearts more to devotion; their hearts were
 accustomed to sacrifices from childhood. For from the time of Enosh
 [III/73] all men had become completely accustomed to sacrifices,¹⁵ so that it was
 only by them that they were most roused to devotion. So the Patriarchs
 sacrificed to God, not because some divine legislation commanded it,
 nor because they had been instructed in the universal foundations of
 divine law, but only because it was the custom at that time. If they did
 5 it because of someone's command, that command was nothing but the
 legislation of the republic in which they were living, by which they
 were also bound (as we have already noted here, and also in Ch. 3,
 when we spoke about Melchizedek).¹⁶

[17] With this I think I have proven my opinion by the authority
 10 of Scripture. It remains now to show how and why ceremonies served
 to preserve and stabilize the Hebrews' state. I shall show this from
 universal foundations, as briefly as I can.

[18] A social order is very useful, and even most necessary, not only
 for living securely from enemies, but also for doing many things more
 15 easily. For if men were not willing to give mutual assistance to one
 another, they would lack both skill and time to sustain and preserve
 themselves as far as possible. [19] Not all men are equally capable of
 all things, and no one would be able to provide the things which a man
 alone needs most. Everyone, I say, would lack both the strength and
 20 the time, if he alone had to plow, to sow, to reap, to grind, to cook, to
 weave, to sew, and to do the many other things necessary to support
 life—not to mention now the arts and sciences which are also supremely
 necessary for the perfection of human nature and for its blessedness.
 [20] For we see that those who live barbarously, without an organized
 25 community, lead a wretched and almost brutal life, and that still it is
 not without mutual assistance, such as it is, that they are able to provide
 themselves with the few wretched and crude things they have.¹⁷

15. Gen. 4:26, which does not specifically mention sacrifices, reports that in the time
 of Enosh (the grandson of Adam through Seth) people began to invoke Yahweh by name.
 According to a different tradition, preserved in Exod. 3:13–15, 6:2–3, the name Yahweh
 was introduced in the time of Moses. See the discussion in *Anchor Genesis*, 37–38.

16. In iii, 23–24.

17. The considerations Spinoza introduces here will recur in xvi, 13, as part of his
 argument for a social contract. They occur also in Hobbes. Cf. *Leviathan* xiii, 9, 14.

Now if nature had so constituted men that they desired nothing except what true reason teaches them to desire, then of course a society could exist without laws; in that case it would be completely sufficient
 30 to teach men true moral lessons, so that they would do voluntarily, wholeheartedly, and in a manner worthy of a free man, what is really useful. [21] But human nature is not constituted like that at all. It's true that everyone seeks his own advantage—but people want things and judge them useful, not by the dictate of sound reason, but for the most part only from immoderate desire and because they are carried away by affects of mind which take no account of the future and of other
 [III/74] things. [22] That's why no society can continue in existence without authority and force, and hence, laws which moderate and restrain men's immoderate desires and unchecked impulses.

Nevertheless, human nature does not allow itself to be compelled in everything. As the Tragic poet, Seneca, says, no one has sustained a
 5 violent rule for long; moderate ones last.¹⁸ For as long as men act only from fear, they act very unwillingly, and don't recognize the advantage, even the necessity, of doing what they're doing. All they care about is saving their necks, and avoiding punishment. They can only rejoice whenever some evil or harm happens to their ruler, however much evil it may bring them; they can't help wanting all sorts of bad things to
 10 happen to him; when they can, they help to bring them about. Again, the hardest thing for them to endure is being subservient to their equals, and being governed by them. Finally, nothing is more difficult than to take freedom away from men again, once it has been granted.

[23] From these [foundations] it follows, first, that either the whole society should hold sovereignty as a body (if this can be done), so that
 15 everyone is bound to be subject to himself, and no one is bound to be subject to his equal—or else, if a few men have sovereignty, or one man alone, he ought to have something above ordinary human nature. If he does not surpass ordinary human nature, he at least must strive with all his might to persuade the common people of this.

[24] Secondly, [it follows from the foundations that] in each state the laws must be so instituted that men are checked not so much by fear as by the hope of some good they desire very much. For in this
 20 way everyone will do his duty eagerly.

[25] Finally, since obedience consists in someone's carrying out a command solely on the authority of the person who commands it, it

18. Seneca, *Troades* 258–59, quoted again at III/194/15. As ALM note, Spinoza's Latin teacher, Van den Enden, had his students put on performances, not only of Terence's comedies, but also of Seneca's tragedies.

follows that obedience has no place in a social order where sovereignty is in the hands of everyone and laws are enacted by common consent, and that whether the laws in such a social order are increased or diminished, the people nevertheless remains equally free, because it does not act from the authority of someone else, but by its own consent. But the opposite happens where one person alone holds sovereignty absolutely. For everyone carries out the commands of the state solely because of the authority of one person, with the result that, unless they have been educated from the beginning to hang on the words of the ruler, it will be difficult for him to institute new laws when it is necessary, and to take away a freedom once it has been granted to the people.

[26] Let us now apply these general considerations to the Hebrew republic.¹⁹ When they first left Egypt, they were no longer bound by the legislation of any other nation; so they were permitted, as they [III/75] wished, to enact new laws *or* to establish new legislation, and to have a state wherever they wished, and to occupy what lands they wished. [27] Nevertheless, they were quite incapable of establishing legislation wisely and keeping the sovereignty in their own hands, as a body. Almost all of them were unsophisticated in their mentality and weakened by wretched bondage. Therefore, the sovereignty had to remain in the hands of one person only, who would command the others, compel them by force, and finally, who would prescribe laws and afterward interpret them.

[28] But Moses was easily able to retain this sovereignty, because he excelled the others in divine power, persuaded the people that he had it, and showed this by a great deal of evidence (see Exodus 14:29, 19:9). So through a divine power in which he was preeminent, he established legislation and prescribed it to the people. But in these matters he took the greatest care that the people should do their duty, not so much from fear, as voluntarily.²⁰ Two things in particular forced this on him: the stubborn mentality of the people (because it would not allow itself to be compelled solely by force) and the threat of war. For if war is to go well, it is better to encourage the soldiers than to frighten them with penalties and threats. In this way they will be eager to distinguish themselves for excellence and nobility of spirit rather than merely to avoid punishment.

[29] That's why Moses, by divine power and command, introduced religion into the Republic, so that the people would do their duty

19. Cf. xvii, 26–40.

20. ALM call attention to a passage in Terence's *Adelphi*, 74–75, another of the Latin authors whose plays Van den Enden had his students perform. Cf. also TP x, 7.

not so much from fear as from devotion. He also placed them under obligation with benefits, and in the name of God promised them many things in the future. Moreover, the laws he enacted were not very severe. Anyone who has concerned himself with them will easily grant that, particularly if he has attended to the circumstances which were
25 required to condemn someone as guilty.²¹

[30] Finally, in order that the people, who were not capable of being their own masters, should hang on the words of its ruler, he did not permit these men, accustomed as they were to bondage, to act just as they pleased. For the people could do nothing without being bound at the same time to remember the law, and to carry out commands which depended only on the will of the ruler. For it was not at their
30 own pleasure, but according to a fixed and determinate command of the law, that they were permitted to plow, to sow, to reap.²² Likewise, they were not permitted to eat anything, to dress, to shave their head or beard, to rejoice, or to do absolutely anything, except according to the orders and commandments prescribed in the laws. This was not all. They were also bound to have on the doorposts, on their hands,
[III/76] and between their eyes, certain signs, which always reminded them of the need for obedience.²³

[31] This, then, was the object of the ceremonies: that men should do nothing by their own decision, but everything according to the command of someone else, and that they should confess, both by constantly repeated actions and by meditations, that they were not their own master in anything, but were completely subjected to some-
5 one else's control. From all this it is established, more clearly than by broad daylight, that ceremonies contribute nothing to blessedness, and that those of the Old Testament, indeed, the whole law of Moses, was concerned with nothing but the Hebrew state, and consequently, with nothing but corporeal advantages.²⁴

[32] As for the Christian ceremonies, viz., Baptism, the lord's Supper, the festivals, public statements, and whatever others there may be
10 which are and always have been common to all Christianity, if Christ or the Apostles ever instituted these (which so far I do not find to be sufficiently established), they were instituted only as external signs of

21. Cf. Deut. 19:15, according to which two or more witnesses are required for conviction for any crime.

22. Cf. Deut. 22:9–10.

23. Cf. Deut. 6:8–9.

24. This section of the TTP would thus provide one way for Spinoza to defend one of the opinions for which he was excommunicated, his contention that the Law of Moses was not the true law. Cf. the Editorial Preface to the TTP, pp. 49–50, 52–53.

the universal Church, not as things which contribute to blessedness or have any holiness in them.²⁵

- 15 [33] So though these ceremonies were not instituted with respect to a state, still they were instituted only with respect to the whole Society.²⁶ So someone who lives alone is not bound by them at all. Indeed, someone who lives in a state where the Christian religion is forbidden is bound to abstain from these ceremonies. But he can still live blessedly.
- 20 [34] We have an example of this in Japan, where the Christian religion is forbidden, and the Dutch who live there are bound by a command of the East India Company to abstain from all external worship.²⁷

I do not intend to prove this now by any other authority, though it would not be difficult to deduce this too from the fundamental principles of the New Testament, and perhaps to show it also by clear evidence. Nevertheless I prefer to put these things to one side, because I am anxious to get to other matters. So I proceed to the second question I have decided to discuss in this chapter: for whom is faith in the historical narratives contained in Scriptures necessary? and why? To investigate this by the natural light, it seems that we should proceed as follows.

- 30 [35] If someone wants to persuade or dissuade men of something not known through itself, to get them to embrace it he must deduce it from things which have been granted, and convince them either by experience or by reason, viz., either from things they have experienced through the senses as happening in nature, or from intellectual axioms known through themselves. But unless the experience is such that it

25. In rejecting these Christian ceremonies, Spinoza's position resembles that of the Quakers. Cf. Barbour 2005.

26. That is, as I take it, the Christian religious community, which lacks the political structure characteristic of a state, and transcends national boundaries.

27. Catholic missionaries had been active in Japan since the mid-sixteenth century and the Dutch established a trading post there early in the seventeenth century. But the Tokugawa shoguns, aware of the role of missionaries in the Spanish and Portuguese colonialism in Asia, came to view them as a threat to their rule. They banned Christianity, expelled the missionaries, and adopted a policy of national seclusion. From 1633 until the nineteenth century, Japanese subjects were prohibited from traveling abroad. Foreign contact was limited to a few Chinese and Dutch merchants allowed to trade through the port of Nagasaki, on the condition that they would refrain from proselytizing and from publicly practicing Christianity. When this agreement became known in the Netherlands, the Calvinist clergy, mindful of the willingness of the early Christians to suffer martyrdom in the Roman Empire, strongly opposed it. During the French invasion of the Dutch Republic in the 1670s, Jean-Baptiste Stoupe, a Swiss Calvinist in the service of Louis XIV, sought to justify the participation of Protestants in a Catholic war against a Protestant country on the ground that the Dutch Republic was not truly a Protestant country. He cited both the agreement with Japan and the "unlimited freedom" the Republic extended to all sorts of religions (and to freethinkers like Spinoza). For further detail, see Stoupe 1673; ALM, 727–28, n. 29; and Gebhardt V, 34–36. Spinoza will refer to this agreement again in xvi, 67.

[III/77] is clearly and distinctly understood, even though it convinces a man, it will still not be able to affect his intellect and disperse its clouds as much as when the thing to be taught is deduced solely from intellectual axioms, i.e., solely by the power of the intellect and its order in perceiving. This is particularly true if it is a question of a spiritual
5 thing, which does not in any way fall under the senses.

[36] But because deducing a thing solely from intellectual notions very often requires a long chain of perceptions, plus extreme caution, mental perceptiveness, and restraint—all of which are rarely found in men—men would rather be taught by experience than deduce all their
10 perceptions from a few axioms and connect them together.

[37] It follows that if someone wants to teach a doctrine to a whole nation—not to mention the whole human race—and wants everyone to understand him in every respect, he is bound to prove his doctrine solely by experience, and for the most part to accommodate his arguments and the definitions of his teaching to the power of understanding of ordinary people, who form the greatest part of the human race.
15 He should not connect his arguments, or give definitions, according as they serve to connect his arguments better. Otherwise he will write only for the learned, i.e., he will be intelligible only to very few men, compared with the rest.

[38] Since the whole of Scripture was revealed first for the use of a
20 whole nation, and eventually for the use of the whole human race, the things it contains must necessarily have been accommodated chiefly to ordinary people's power of understanding and proved by experience alone. Let us explain this matter more clearly. The strictly speculative matters Scripture wishes to teach²⁸ are chiefly these:

25 there is a God, *or* a being who has made all things, who directs and sustains them with supreme wisdom, and who takes the greatest care of those men who live piously and honorably. As for the others, he inflicts many punishments on them and separates them from the good.

[39] Scripture proves these teachings solely by experience, i.e., by
30 the narratives it relates. It does not give any definitions of these things, but accommodates all its words and arguments to ordinary people's power of understanding. And although experience cannot give any clear knowledge of these things, or teach what God is, and how he sustains and directs all things, and how he takes care of men,²⁹ still it

28. Here we get a first sketch of the minimum creed Spinoza will develop later in xii, 34–38, and xiv, 5–34.

29. Questions Spinoza addressed earlier in iii, 7–11.

[III/78] can teach and enlighten men enough to imprint obedience and devotion on their hearts.

[40] This establishes clearly enough, I think, who needs faith in the historical narratives contained in Scripture, and why. From what we have just shown it follows with utmost clarity that acquaintance with them, and faith in them, is most necessary for the common people, whose mentality is not able to perceive things clearly and distinctly.

Next it follows that whoever denies these narratives because he does not believe that there is a God, or that God provides for things and for men, is impious. On the other hand, someone who is not familiar with them, and nevertheless knows by the natural light that God exists, and the other things we have just mentioned [in §38], and moreover has a true manner of living, that person is completely blessed.³⁰ Indeed, he is more blessed than the common people, because in addition to true opinions, he has a clear and distinct conception.

[41] Finally, it follows that if someone is not familiar with these historical narratives in Scripture and does not know anything by the natural light, even if he is not impious *or* stubborn, still he is devoid of human feeling, and almost a beast. He does not have any of God's gift.

But note: when we say that acquaintance with historical narratives is very necessary for the common people, we do not mean acquaintance with absolutely all the narratives contained in Scripture, but only with the main ones, which by themselves, without the others, show the teaching we have just mentioned more clearly, and are most capable of moving men's hearts. [42] For if all the Scriptural narratives were necessary to prove its teaching, and no conclusion could be drawn without a general consideration of absolutely all the stories contained in it,³¹ then surely the demonstration of the teaching and the conclusion would surpass, not only the grasp and powers of ordinary people, but those of all men without exception. For who could attend all at once to so many narratives, to so many circumstances, and to so many parts of the teaching which would have to be drawn from so many and such different stories?

[43] For my part, I cannot believe that the men who left us the Scripture as we have it were so plentifully supplied with understanding that they could find such a demonstration; much less can I believe that the teaching of Scripture could not be understood except by someone who had heard the quarrels of Isaac, the advice given by Achitophel

30. Here Spinoza sets himself against the exclusivism affirmed in such New Testament passages as John 3:18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:9–28, 5:12–21; etc. Cf. Letter 76 and the discussion of it in Curley 2010.

31. As Maimonides had argued, *Guide* III, 50.

to Absalom, the civil war of the Jews and the Israelites, and other Chronicles of that kind. Nor can I believe that that teaching could not be demonstrated as easily to the first Jews, who lived in the time
[III/79] of Moses, as it could to those who lived in the time of Ezra. But more of this later.

[44] The common people, then, are bound to know only those narratives which are most able to move their hearts to obedience and devotion. But they themselves are not very well able to make a judgment
5 [about which narratives those are], because they take more pleasure in the narration, and in the particular and unexpected outcomes, than they do in what the narratives teach. So, in addition to reading the narratives, they need Pastors *or* ministers of the Church as well, who will teach them according to the weakness of their understanding.

[45] But not to wander from our subject, let us conclude with what
10 we mainly meant to show, viz. that faith in historical narratives, whatever in the end those narratives may be, does not pertain to the divine law and does not render men more blessed in itself, and does not have any utility except in relation to teaching. It is only in this respect that some narratives can be better than others.

[46] So the narratives contained in the Old and New Testaments
15 are better than the other, secular narratives, and among the [scriptural narratives], some are better than others, in proportion as the opinions which follow from them are salutary. Hence, if someone has read the narratives of Holy Scripture, and has had faith in them in every respect, and has nevertheless not attended to the lesson Scripture intends to teach with those stories, nor improved his life, it is just the same as if
20 he had read the Koran, or the dramas of the Poets, or even the ordinary Chronicles, with the same attention as the common people usually give to these things. On the other hand, as we have said, someone who is completely unfamiliar with these narratives, and nevertheless has salutary opinions and a true manner of living, is completely blessed and really has the Spirit of Christ in him.³²

[47] But the Jews think just the opposite.³³ For they maintain that true
25 opinions and a true manner of living contribute nothing to blessedness so

32. So Spinoza's view is pluralistic, in the sense that he thinks no one religious book which claims to offer a unique route to salvation actually does that.

33. Maimonides' position was not universal among Jews even in the medieval period. But the issue was an important one in the Amsterdam Jewish community of Spinoza's day, and seems to have been one of the issues which separated Spinoza and Juan de Prado from that community. On this see Kaplan 1989, 122–78. Since the Enlightenment a more pluralistic understanding of the relation of Judaism to other religions has been common (though not universal). In the eighteenth century Moses Mendelssohn is particularly close to Spinoza's view. On history of this problem, see Porton 2005.

long as men embrace them only by the natural light and not as teachings revealed prophetically to Moses. In ch. 8 of Kings, law 11, Maimonides is bold enough to affirm this openly, in these words: כל המקבל שבע מצות ונזהר לעשותן הרי זה מחסידי אומות העולם ויש לו חלק לעולם הבא : והוא שיקבל אותן ויעשה אותן מפני שצוה בהן הקדוש ברוך הוא בתורה והודיענו על ידי משה רבינו שבני נח מקודם נצטוו בהן אבל אם עשהן מפני הכרע הדעת אין זה גר תושב ואינו מחסידי אומות

[III/80] *everyone who has accepted the seven precepts^{34*} and has carried them out diligently is among the pious of the Nations, and will inherit the world to come, that is, provided he has accepted them and carried them out because God commanded them in the law and because he revealed to us through Moses that previously he gave the same precepts to the sons of Noah; but if he*

5 *has carried them out because he has been led by reason, he is not a resident,³⁵ nor to be numbered among the pious of the Nations, nor among their wise men.³⁶*

[48] Those are the words of Maimonides. And Rabbi Joseph, son of Shem Tov, adds in his book, *Kevod Elohim, or Glory of God*,³⁷ that even if Aristotle (who he thinks wrote the best Ethics, and whom he

10 esteems above all others) had included all the things which concern the true Ethics, and which he has embraced in his own Ethics, but had carried out all of them diligently, this still could not have helped him attain salvation. For he did not embrace the things he teaches as divine teachings, prophetically revealed, but only as dictates of reason.

34. *The Jews think that God gave Noah seven precepts and that it is only by those precepts that all nations are bound; but they think he gave a great many others as well to the Hebrew nation alone, so as to make it more blessed than the others. [The seven precepts which Spinoza says God is thought to have given to Noah (known as the Noachide laws) include prohibitions of idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, theft, eating a limb torn from a living animal, and an injunction to establish a legal system. There has been debate within the Jewish tradition as to whether the Noachide laws constituted a formulation of natural law or were intended only to govern the conduct of non-Jews living under Jewish jurisdiction. For further detail, see Schwarzschild et al. 2007.]

35. Spinoza uses the term *incola*, resident, or inhabitant, to translate a Hebrew phrase which normally designates a resident alien, someone who has the right to live in a political community without being a citizen.

36. See the Mishneh Torah, Hilkot Melakim 8, 11, and the discussions of this passage in Fox 1990, 130–32, and Kaplan 1989, 118–22. The text Spinoza translates appears to be corrupt. Modern editions of Maimonides have a reading in which the last clause would be translated “but among their wise men.” ALM, 729–30, n. 40, helpfully summarizes the debate among Joel, Cohen, and Strauss about whether Maimonides’ position on the righteous among the gentiles is truly representative of the Jewish tradition. See also Porton 2005.

37. Joseph ben Shem Tov (c. 1400–c. 1460) was a philosopher and physician in the court of two Spanish kings, John II and Henry IV. His *Kevod Elohim* (written in 1442, but not published until 1556) argued that Aristotle’s views could be reconciled with the teachings of the Torah, and that philosophical inquiry could be useful to religion. A Jew who philosophizes is better than one who practices his religious duties blindly. But he did not think it was necessary to understand philosophy or the reasons for the divine commandments in order to practice them.

[49] But I think anyone who reads these things attentively will find
 15 it clear enough that these are all just inventions, unsupported either by
 any reasons or by the authority of Scripture. To refute this position,
 it's enough to give an account of it. Nor do I intend here to refute
 the opinion of those who maintain that the natural light cannot teach
 anything sound about the things bearing on true salvation. For a per-
 20 son who does not grant himself any sound reason can not prove this
 by any reason.³⁸ And if they seek to recommend themselves as having
 something beyond reason, that is a mere invention, and far beneath
 reason, which their ordinary way of living has already sufficiently shown.

[50] But there is no need to speak more openly about these people.
 I add only this: that we cannot know anyone except by his works.
 25 Therefore, if a man is rich in these fruits,³⁹ loving-kindness, gladness,
 peace, patience, beneficence, goodness, good faith, gentleness, and self-
 restraint—against which (as Paul says in Galatians 5:22) there is no
 law—whether he has been taught only by reason or only by Scripture,
 he has truly been taught by God and is completely blessed. With this
 30 I have finished everything I had decided to say about the divine law.

[III/81]

CHAPTER VI

On Miracles

[1] Just as men are in the habit of calling divine whatever 'knowledge
 surpasses the human power of understanding, so they've become accus-
 5 tomed to call a work divine, *or* a work of God, if its cause is commonly
 not known. For the common people think God's power and providence
 are established most clearly when they see something unusual happen
 in nature, which is contrary to the opinion they have of nature from
 custom. This is particularly so if the event has turned out to their profit
 10 or advantage. They judge that nothing can prove God's existence more
 clearly than that nature, as they think, does not maintain its order.

That's why these people think someone who explains things and
 miracles by their natural causes, or who strives to understand them,
 eliminates God, or at least God's providence. [2] For they think that
 God does nothing so long as nature acts according to its usual order.
 15 Conversely, they think the power of nature and natural causes are inactive

38. Another reference to the Calvinists. Cf. Preface, §17.

39. Alluding to a proverb found in the gospels, e.g., Matt. 7:16, 20; 12:33.

so long as God acts. So they imagine two powers numerically distinct from one another, the power of God and the power of natural things. Nevertheless, they think the power of natural things is determined by God in a certain way—or (as most think today instead) created.

20 [3] But what do they understand by these two powers, and by God and nature? They don't know, of course, except that they imagine God's power as the rule of a certain Royal majesty, whereas they imagine nature's power as force and impulse. So the common people call unusual works of nature miracles, *or* works of God. Partly from devotion, partly
 25 from a desire to oppose those who cultivate the natural sciences, they don't want to know the natural causes of things. They long to hear only the things they're most ignorant of, which they're most amazed by. [4] They can worship God and relate all things to his rule and will only by eliminating natural causes and imagining events outside the
 30 order of nature. They marvel most at the power of God when they imagine the power of nature as if it were subjected to God's control.

This [attitude] seems to have originated with the earliest Jews. The Gentiles of their time worshipped visible Gods, such as the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, Water, Air, etc. To prove them wrong and to show
 [III/82] them that those Gods were weak and inconstant, *or* changeable, and under the rule of an invisible God, the Jews related their miracles, by which they tried to show that the whole of nature was directed only for their advantage, by the command of the God they worshipped. This was so pleasing to men that to this day they haven't ceased to feign miracles, so that they might be believed to be dearer to God than the
 5 rest, and the final cause on account of which God has created, and continually directs, all things.

[5] What do the common people not foolishly claim for themselves, because they have no sound concept either of God or of nature, because they confuse God's decrees with men's decisions, and finally, because
 10 they posit a nature so limited that they believe man to be its chief part! But that's enough about the opinions and prejudices of the common people regarding Nature and miracles. [6] To treat this topic in proper order, I'll show

(i) that nothing happens contrary to nature, but that it preserves an eternal, fixed and immutable order [§§7–12]; at the same time, I'll show
 15 what must be understood by a miracle [§§13–15];

(ii) I'll show that we cannot know either the essence or the existence of God from miracles, and hence, that we cannot know his providence from miracles, but that all these things are far better perceived from the fixed and immutable order of nature [§§16–38];

(iii) by a number of Scriptural examples I'll show that Scripture itself understands by God's decrees and volitions—and hence his providence—nothing but the order itself of nature, which follows necessarily from its eternal laws [§§39–51];

(iv) finally, I'll discuss how the miracles of Scripture are to be understood, and what must principally be noted regarding the miracle narratives [§§52–64].

These are the main points of the argument of this chapter. I think they'll contribute in no small way to the purpose of the work as a whole.

[7] The first point [that nothing happens contrary to nature, but that it preserves an eternal, fixed and immutable order] is easily shown from what we demonstrated in Ch. 4¹ regarding the divine law: viz. that whatever God wills *or* determines involves eternal necessity and truth; [8] for we have shown, from the fact that God's intellect is not distinguished from his will, that we affirm the same thing when we say that God wills something as when we say that he understands it. So by the same necessity with which it follows from the divine nature and perfection that God understands a thing as it is, it follows also that God wills the same thing as it is.² [9] But since nothing is necessarily true except by the divine decree alone, it follows quite clearly from this that the universal laws of nature are nothing but decrees of God, which follow from the necessity and perfection of the divine nature. Therefore, if anything were to happen in nature which was contrary to its universal laws, it would also necessarily be contrary to the divine decree, intellect and nature. Or if someone were to maintain that God does something contrary to the laws of nature, he would be compelled to maintain at the same time also that God acts in a way contrary to his own nature. Nothing would be more absurd than that.

We could also show the same thing from the fact that the power of nature is the divine power and virtue itself. Moreover, the divine power is the very essence of God. But for the present I prefer to pass over this.³ [10] Nothing, therefore, happens in nature^{4*} which is contrary to its universal laws. Nor does anything happen which does not agree

1. See iv, 23–25.

2. That is, because God's intellect necessarily understands things as they are, and because his will and intellect are identical, his will necessarily wills them as they are.

3. Because the argument of the preceding paragraph relied on ascribing will and intellect to God, we might reasonably suspect it of being *ad hominem*. Cf. iv, 23, and the annotation there. But this paragraph seems to suggest an argument which relies only on doctrines Spinoza himself holds.

4. *NB: By Nature here I do not understand only matter and its affections, but in addition to matter, infinite other things.

with those laws or does not follow from them. For whatever happens, happens by God's will and eternal decree, i.e., as we have now shown, whatever happens, happens according to laws and rules which involve eternal necessity and truth.

15 [11] So nature always observes laws and rules which involve eternal necessity and truth—though they are not all known to us—and so it also observes a fixed and immutable order. No sound reason urges us to attribute a limited power and virtue to nature, or to maintain that its laws are suited only for certain things and not everything. For since
20 nature's virtue and power is the very virtue and power of God, and its laws and rules are God's decrees themselves, we must believe without reservation that the power of nature is infinite, and that its laws are so broad that they extend to everything which is conceived by the divine intellect itself. [12] For otherwise what else are we saying but that God
25 has created a nature so impotent, and established laws and rules for it so sterile, that often he is compelled to come to its aid anew, if he wants it to be preserved and wants things to turn out as he wished? I think nothing is more foreign to reason than that.

[13] Thus, from these propositions—that nothing happens in nature
30 which does not follow from its laws, that its laws extend to all things conceived by the Divine intellect itself, and finally, that nature maintains a fixed and immutable order—it clearly follows that the term “miracle” cannot be understood except in relation to men's opinions,
[III/84] and means nothing but a work whose natural cause we cannot explain by the example of another familiar thing, or at least which cannot be so explained by the one who writes or relates the miracle.

[14] I could, of course, say that a miracle is something whose cause cannot be explained according to the principles of natural things known
5 to the natural light. But since miracles have occurred according to the power of understanding of the common people, who were, in fact, completely ignorant of the principles of natural things, it is certain that the ancients took for a miracle what they could not explain in the way the common people are accustomed to explain natural things, viz. by falling back on memory to recall some other similar thing they are
10 accustomed to imagine without wonder. For the common people think they understand a thing well enough when they do not wonder at it.

[15] So the ancients, and almost everyone up till now, has had no other standard for a miracle than this. We ought not doubt that many things are related as miracles in the Sacred Texts whose causes can easily
15 be explained according to known principles of natural things. We already hinted at this in Ch. 2 when we spoke about the sun's standing

still in the time of Joshua, and its going backward in the time of Ahaz.⁵ But we'll soon treat this more fully, when we discuss the interpretation of miracles, as I've promised to do in this chapter.

20 [16] It's time now to pass to the second point, viz. to show that from miracles we understand neither God's essence, nor his existence, nor his providence, but that on the contrary these things are far better perceived from the fixed and immutable order of nature. I proceed to demonstrate this as follows.⁶

[17] Since God's existence is not known through itself,^{7**} it must
25 necessarily be inferred from notions whose truth is so firm and steady that no power can be or be conceived by which they could be changed. At least, so they must appear to us when we infer God's existence from them, if we want to infer it beyond any chance of doubt. For if we
30 could conceive that the notions themselves could be changed by some power, whatever in the end it was, we would doubt their truth, and consequently also doubt our conclusion, viz. God's existence, so that we could never be certain of anything.

[18] Next, we know that nothing agrees with nature (or is contrary to it) except what we have shown to agree with those principles (or to be contrary to them). So if we could conceive that by some
[III/85] power (whatever in the end it was) something could happen in nature which was contrary to nature, that would be contrary to those first notions, and we would have to reject it as absurd—either that, or we would have to doubt the first notions (as we have just shown) and consequently, doubt God and all things, however they might have been perceived.

5 [19] So it is far from true that miracles (understood as works contrary to the order of nature) show us the existence of God. On the contrary, they would make us doubt his existence, since without them we could

5. See Josh. 10:12–14, Isa. 38:7–8, and 2 Kings 20:8–11, discussed in ii, 26–28.

6. Gebhardt points out (V, 39) that this was one of the issues on which Spinoza and Juan de Prado agreed, as we can learn from Orobio de Castro's *Epistola invectiva contra Prado*. ALM cite Revah 1959, 102–4.

7. **[ADN. VI] So long as the idea we have of God himself is not clear and distinct, but confused, we doubt God's existence, and consequently we doubt everything. For just as someone who does not properly know the nature of a triangle does not know that its three angles are equal to two right angles, so one who conceives the divine nature confusedly does not see that it pertains to the nature of God to exist. But for us to be able to conceive God's nature clearly and distinctly, we must attend to certain very simple notions, called common notions, and connect with them those pertaining to the divine nature. If we do that, it becomes evident to us: first, that God exists necessarily and is everywhere; next, that whatever we conceive involves in itself the nature of God and is conceived through it; and finally, that everything we conceive adequately is true. But on these matters see the preface of the book entitled *The principles of philosophy demonstrated in a geometric manner* [Volume I, pp. 231–38].

be absolutely certain of his existence, i.e., when we know that all things in nature follow a fixed and immutable order.

- 10 [20] But suppose a miracle is something which cannot be explained by natural causes. This can be understood in either of two ways: either it in fact has natural causes which nevertheless cannot be found by the human intellect, or it admits no cause except God, *or* God's will. [21] But because all things which happen through natural causes also
15 happen from God's power and will alone, in the end we must arrive at this: that whether a miracle has natural causes or not, it is a work which cannot be explained by its cause, i.e., a work which surpasses man's power of understanding.

But from a work, and absolutely, from anything which surpasses
20 our power of understanding, we can understand nothing. For whatever we understand clearly and distinctly must become known to us either through itself or through something else which through itself is understood clearly and distinctly. [22] So from a miracle, *or* a work surpassing our power of understanding, we can understand neither God's essence, nor his existence, nor absolutely anything concerning
25 God and nature. On the contrary, since we know that all things are determined and ordained by God, that nature's operations follow from God's essence, indeed, that the laws of nature are God's eternal decrees and volitions, we must conclude absolutely that the better we know natural things—the more clearly we understand how they depend on
30 their first cause, and how they produce effects according to the eternal laws of nature—the better we know God and his will.

[23] That's why, in relation to our intellect, we have a far better right to call those works we clearly and distinctly understand works of God, and to refer them to God's will, than we do those we are completely ignorant of, though the latter occupy our imagination powerfully and
[III/86] carry men away with wonder. For only the works of nature which we understand clearly and distinctly make our knowledge of God more elevated and indicate God's will and decrees as clearly as possible. So those who have recourse to the will of God when they have no knowledge of a thing are just trifling. It's a ridiculous way of confessing their ignorance.⁸

- 5 [24] Again, even if we could infer something from miracles, we could still not infer God's existence from them in any way. For since a miracle is a limited work, and never expresses any power except a definite and limited one, it is certain that from such an effect we cannot
10 infer the existence of a cause whose power is infinite, but at most that

8. Cf. E App., II/81/10–11.

of a cause whose power is greater [than that expressed by the effect]. I say *at most*, because from many causes concurring at the same time, there can also follow a work whose force and power is indeed less than the power of all the causes together, but far greater than the power of each cause. [25] But since (as we've already shown)⁹ the laws of nature
 15 extend to infinitely many things, and we conceive them under a certain species of eternity, and nature proceeds according to them in a definite and immutable order, to that extent they indicate to us God's infinity, eternity and immutability.

[26] We conclude, then, that we cannot know God, his existence,
 20 or his providence, by miracles; but we can infer these things far better from the fixed and immutable order of nature. In this conclusion I speak of a miracle only as a work which surpasses, or is believed to surpass, men's power of understanding. For insofar as we suppose it to destroy, *or* interrupt, the order of nature, or to be contrary to nature's laws, to
 25 that extent (as we have just shown) it could give no knowledge of God; on the contrary, it would take away the knowledge we naturally have, and make us doubt God and everything else.

[27] I don't recognize here any difference between a work contrary to nature and a work above nature (i.e., as some say, a work which in
 30 fact is not contrary to nature, but which still cannot be produced or brought about by it).¹⁰ For since a miracle doesn't happen outside nature, but in nature itself, even if it's said to be above nature, it's still necessary that it interrupt the order of nature, which we otherwise conceive as fixed and immutable, according to God's decrees. [28] Therefore, if something were to happen in nature which did not follow from its laws,
 [III/87] that would necessarily be incompatible with the order which God has

9. Above iv, 23–25; vi, 7–12.

10. In CM II, 12 (I/276–77) Spinoza had noted that “most of the more prudent theologians concede that God does nothing against nature, but only acts above nature.” As he explained the distinction there, God's acting “above nature” involves his acting according to laws he has not communicated to the human intellect. It seems doubtful that the theologians to whom he refers would accept that explanation. In ST I, qu. 105, art. 6, Aquinas wrestles with the problem posed by Augustine's statements that “God, the Maker and Creator of each nature, does nothing against nature” (*Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, vol. I/20, in Augustine 1990; PL 42, 480) and “God sometimes does things which are contrary to the usual course of nature” (*Answer to Faustus, a Manichean*, vol. I/20, in Augustine 1990; PL 42, 481). His solution seems to depend on making a distinction between “the order of things as it depends on the first cause” (which God cannot act against, since doing so would involve acting against his foreknowledge, or his will, or his goodness) and “the order of things according as it depends on any secondary cause.” Because God is not subject to the order of secondary causes, which depends on his will, he can do something outside that order. So, he can produce “the effects of secondary causes without [the secondary causes],” or produce “certain effects to which the secondary causes do not extend.”

established to eternity in nature through the laws of nature. And so that would be contrary to nature and its laws. Hence belief in it would make us doubt everything and would lead to Atheism.

[29] I think I've now shown, by strong enough reasons, what I wanted
 5 to regarding the Second point. From this we can conclude again that a miracle—whether [defined as] contrary to nature or above nature—is just an absurdity. So the only way we can understand a miracle in the Sacred Texts is as a work of nature which, as we have said, either surpasses men's power of understanding or is believed to surpass it.

10 [30] Before I proceed to my third point, I should like first to confirm, by the authority of Scripture, this opinion of ours—viz. that we cannot know God from miracles. Scripture nowhere teaches this openly. Still, it can easily be inferred from it, especially from what Moses commands (Deuteronomy 13[:1–5]), that [the people of Israel] should condemn to
 15 death a Prophet who leads them astray, even if he performs miracles.

[31] For he says that (even if) *לא תשמע אל* : *a sign and a wonder he has predicted to you should happen, etc., do not* (nevertheless) *assent to the words of this Prophet etc., because the Lord your God tests you*
 20 *etc.* (Therefore) *let that Prophet be condemned to death etc.* From this it clearly follows that even false Prophets can perform miracles, and that unless men are well protected by the true knowledge and love of God, miracles can lead them to embrace false Gods as easily as the True God. For Moses adds *וגו כי מנסה יהוה אלהיכם אתכם וגו* *since the LORD your God is test-*
 25 *ing you, to know whether you love him with all your heart and all your soul.*

[32] Moreover, in spite of their many miracles, the Israelites were still not able to form any sound concept of God, as experience itself has testified. For when they believed Moses had left them, they sought visible divinities from Aaron. The idea of God they finally formed from so many miracles was a calf. How shameful! [Exodus 32:1–6].

30 [33] Although Asaph had heard of so many miracles, he still doubted God's providence and would almost have been turned from the true way if he had not at last understood true blessedness. See Psalm 73. Even Solomon, in whose time the affairs of the Jews were at the peak of their prosperity, supposes that all things happen by chance. See

[III/88] Ecclesiastes 3:19–21, 9:2–3, etc.¹¹

11. The two passages explicitly cited are more notable for their mortalism (or at least, agnosticism about immortality) than for explicitly teaching that all things happen by chance. But see Eccles. 9:11–12. The criticism of Solomon here is somewhat surprising, after the praise of iv, 41–46, and v, 12. Though Ecclesiastes was traditionally ascribed to Solomon, this attribution is now generally rejected. See HCSB 890. When Spinoza discusses Ecclesiastes in x, 5, he does not discuss its authorship, only its canonicity.

[34] Finally, almost all the Prophets found it extremely obscure how the order of nature and what happened to men could agree with the concept they had formed concerning God's providence. But this was always quite clear to the Philosophers, who strive to understand things, not from miracles, but from clear concepts. They locate true happiness only in virtue and peace of mind; they are concerned, not that nature should obey them, but that they should obey nature; they know with certainty that God directs nature as its universal laws require, not as the particular laws of human nature require, and that God takes account, not of the human race only, but of the whole of nature.

[35] Scripture itself, then, establishes that miracles do not give a true knowledge of God or teach his providence clearly. Moreover, what is often found in Scripture—that God brought about wonders, to make himself known to men (as in Exodus 10:[1–]2 God deceived the Egyptians and gave signs of himself, that the Israelites would know that he was God)—does not entail that miracles really teach this, but only that the Jews had opinions which disposed them to be easily convinced by these miracles. [36] For we have shown clearly in the second chapter that the Prophetic arguments, *or* those which are formed from revelation, are not drawn from universal and common notions, but from things previously granted, no matter how absurd, and from the opinions of those to whom the things are revealed, *or* whom the Holy Spirit wishes to convince. We've illustrated this by many examples, and also by the testimony of Paul, who was a Greek with the Greeks and a Jew with the Jews [1 Corinthians 9:20–22].

[37] But although those miracles could convince the Egyptians and the Jews from things they granted, they still could not give a true idea and knowledge of God. They could only make them grant that there is a Divinity more powerful than anything else they knew, and that this Divinity cared, above all others, for the Hebrews (whose affairs at that time were turning out much more fortunately than they hoped). They could not make them grant that God cares equally for all. Only Philosophy can teach that. [38] So the Jews, like all who have known God's providence only from the different conditions of human affairs and men's unequal fortunes, persuaded themselves that they were dearer to God than the others, even though they still did not surpass the others in true human perfection, as we've already shown in Chapter 3.

[III/89] [39] I pass, then, to my Third point. I shall show from Scripture that God's decrees and commands, and consequently his providence, are really nothing but the order of nature. That is, when Scripture says that God did this or that, or that this or that happened by the will of God, what it really means is just that it happened according to the laws and order

of nature, and not, as the common people think, that for some period nature ceased to act, or that for some time its order was interrupted. [40] But Scripture doesn't teach directly things which don't concern its doctrine; as we've shown concerning the divine law, its purpose is not to teach things through their natural causes, or things which are
 10 merely speculative. So what we want to prove here must be drawn by inference from certain Scriptural Narratives, where, by chance, events have been related more fully and with more circumstances.¹² I'll cite a number of examples.

[41] In 1 Samuel 9:15–16 it's related that God revealed to Samuel
 15 that he would send Saul to him. Nevertheless, God didn't send Saul to him the way men usually send one man to another; this sending of God's was nothing but the order of nature itself. The same chapter relates [vv. 3–10] that Saul was looking for asses he had lost, and was already deliberating whether to return home without them when he went to the Prophet Samuel, on the advice of his servant, to learn from
 20 him where he could find them. The whole narrative shows that Saul did not have any other command of God than this order of nature to cause him to go to Samuel.

[42] In Psalm 105:24[–25] it's said that God changed the hearts of the Egyptians so they would hate the Israelites. This was also a
 25 completely natural change. It's evident from Exodus 1 that the Egyptians had no slight reason which moved them to reduce the Israelites to bondage.¹³

[43] In Genesis 9:13 God says to Noah that he'll put a rainbow in the clouds. This action of God is certainly nothing but the refraction and reflection of the rays of the sun, which the rays undergo in the drops
 30 of water.¹⁴ In Psalm 147:18 the natural action of the wind, and the heat by which frost and snow are melted, is called the word of God; and in v. 15 the wind and cold are called the command and word of God. In Psalm 104:4 wind and fire are called the messengers and ministers

12. Maimonides' view in the *Guide* II, 48, is similar: whatever is produced in time must have a proximate cause, which is also produced in time—a natural cause, in Spinoza's terms—but the prophets sometimes omit these intermediate causes, and refer the events directly to God. Among the proximate causes omitted Maimonides includes free human choices. This will be a point of difference if Maimonides understands freedom as requiring an absence of causation. But on the face of it, that would be contrary to the causal principle he embraces. It appears that Maimonides was not consistent on this issue. Cf. Fox 1990, 87–88.

13. Exod. 1:7–11 suggests that the rapid growth in numbers, and consequent increasing power, of the Israelites prompted the Egyptians to reduce them to slavery.

14. Spinoza assumes the explanation of the rainbow offered by Descartes in his *Météores*, Discourse 8.

of God. Many other things of this kind are found in Scripture, which indicate quite clearly that the decree, order, dictate and word of God [III/90] are nothing but the very action and order of nature.

[44] So there is no doubt that everything related in Scripture happened naturally, and yet is referred to God, because, as we've already shown, the purpose of Scripture is not to teach things through their natural causes, but only to relate those things which fill the imagination, and to do this
5 by that Method and style which serves best to increase wonder at things, and consequently to impress devotion in the hearts of the common people.

[45] So if we find in the Sacred Texts certain things whose causes we do not know how to give an account of, and which seem to have happened beyond, and indeed, contrary to the order of nature, they must not cause us any difficulty; we must believe without reservation
10 that what really happened happened naturally. This is also confirmed by the fact that in miracles many circumstances were found, although they are not always related, particularly when they are celebrated in the Poetic style. I say that the circumstances of the miracles clearly show that they require natural causes.

[46] For example, to harass the Egyptians with boils, it was necessary
15 for Moses to scatter ashes up into the air (see Exodus 9:10). Also the locusts attacked the country of the Egyptians by a natural command of God, i.e., by an east wind blowing a whole day and night, and they left it again by a very strong west wind (see Exodus 10:14, 19).¹⁵ It was
20 also by the same order of God that the sea opened a way for the Jews (see Exodus 14:21), viz. by Eurus,¹⁶ which blew very strongly all night.

[47] Again, to revive the boy who was believed to be dead, Elisha had to lie upon him several times, until first he became warm and finally he opened his eyes (see 2 Kings 4:34–35).¹⁷ So also the Gospel of John
25 relates certain circumstances Christ used to heal the blind man.¹⁸ Thus many other things are found in Scripture, all of which show sufficiently that miracles require something else besides what they call the absolute command of God.¹⁹

15. Exod. 10:13, 19 would be more exact.

16. That is, the east wind.

17. Spinoza's account of this story—emphasizing that Elisha lay upon the boy several times (*aliquoties*)—seems closer to the version given in the Septuagint than to that in the Masoretic text. But he omits the detail we might find most significant: that Elisha seems to have used what we would call mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

18. John 9:6–7 relates that Jesus spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and applied the mud to the man's eyes.

19. That is, to explain the event in terms of God's decrees (the laws of nature) it is necessary also to understand the particular circumstances under which the laws were operating.

[48] So we must believe that although the circumstances of miracles
 30 and their natural causes are neither always nor all fully described, nevertheless the miracles did not happen without them. This is established also by Exodus 14:27, where it is related only that it was simply by the command of Moses that the sea rose up again, and there is no mention of a wind. Nevertheless, in the Song it is said (15:10) that it happened because God blew with his wind, i.e., with a very strong wind.²⁰ So this circumstance is omitted in the story, and for this reason
 [III/91] the miracle seems greater.

[49] But perhaps someone will object that we find a great many things in Scripture which don't seem capable of being explained in any way by natural causes, e.g., that men's sins and prayers can be the cause of rain or of the fertility of the earth, or that faith was able to heal the
 5 blind, and other things of this kind, related in the Bible.

But I think I have already replied to this. For I have shown²¹ that Scripture does not teach things through their proximate causes, but only relates them in that order and with those phrases with which it can most effectively move people (especially, ordinary people) to devotion. For this reason it speaks quite improperly concerning God and
 10 things, because its concern is not to convince people's reason, but to affect and fill their fantasy and imagination.

[50] If Scripture were to relate the destruction of some state in the way political historians usually do, that would not stir ordinary people at all. On the other hand, if it depicts everything poetically and refers everything to God, as it usually does, it will move them very much.
 15 So when Scripture relates that the earth is barren because of men's sins, or that the blind were healed by faith,²² those passages ought not to move us more than when it relates that because of men's sins God becomes angry, or sad, or repents of the good he has promised or done, or that because he sees a sign, he recalls a promise, or a great many
 20 other things, which are either said poetically or are related according to the opinions and prejudices of the Writer.

[51] So we conclude here, without qualification, that everything Scripture truly relates as having happened must have happened, as all things do, according to the laws of nature. And if anything should be found which can be conclusively demonstrated to be contrary to the
 25 laws of nature, or to have been unable to follow from them, we must

20. Spinoza refers here to the song ascribed to Moses in Exod. 15:1–18, which recapitulates in verse the prose account of the crossing of the Red Sea in Exod. 14.

21. Cf. i, 30–44.

22. ALM suggest Mark 10:51–52 and Luke 18:41–42 as examples of faith-healing. We might add Ps. 107:33–34 as an example of a land said to be barren because of men's sins.

believe without reservation that it has been added to the Sacred Texts by sacrilegious men.²³ For whatever is contrary to nature is contrary to reason; and what is contrary to reason is absurd, and therefore to be rejected.

[52] It remains now only to note a few things concerning the interpretation of miracles, or rather to recapitulate them (for the main
30 points have already been made), and to illustrate them with one or two examples, as I have promised to do here in this Fourth part of the chapter. I want to do this to prevent anyone from rashly supposing, because he has misinterpreted some miracle, that he has found anything in Scripture contrary to the light of nature.

[53] It is quite rare for men to relate a thing simply, just as it happened, without mixing any of their own Judgment into the narration.
[III/92] Indeed, when they see or hear something new, unless they take great precautions against their preconceived opinions, they will, for the most part, be so prejudiced by them that they will perceive something completely different from what they see or hear has happened, particularly if the thing which has been done surpasses the grasp of the narrator or the audience, and especially if it makes a difference to his affairs that
5 the thing should happen in a certain way.

[54] That's why in their Chronicles and histories men relate their own opinions more than the actions they're reporting, and why two men who have different opinions relate one and the same event so differently that they seem to be speaking about two events, and finally, why
10 it is often not very difficult to find out the opinions of the Chronicler and historian just from their histories. If I did not think it would be superfluous, I could cite many examples to confirm this, both from Philosophers who have written the history of nature, and from Chroniclers. But I'll cite only one example from Sacred Scripture. Let the Reader himself judge of the others.

15 [55] In the time of Joshua the Hebrews (as we noted above)²⁴ believed, with the common people, that the sun moves, as they say, with a daily motion and that the earth is at rest. They adapted the miracle which happened to them when they fought against the five kings to this preconceived opinion. For they did not relate simply that that day was longer than usual, but that the sun and the moon stood still, *or* ceased
20 their motion [Joshua 10:12–13]. This was also quite advantageous to them at that time in overcoming the Gentiles, who worshipped the sun,

23. On the possible corruption of the text by pious frauds, see also vii, 3 and 25. See also Letter 76, IV/324a/5–10.

24. See ii, 26–27.

and in proving to them by experience that the sun is under the control of another divinity, according to whose command it is bound to change its natural order. [56] So partly because of religion and partly because
 25 of preconceived opinions they conceived and recounted the affair far differently than it really could have happened.

Therefore, to interpret the miracles in Scripture and to understand from the narrations of them how they really happened, we need to know the opinions of those who first narrated them, and those who left them to us in writing, and to distinguish those opinions from what the
 30 senses could have represented to them. Otherwise we'll confuse their opinions and judgments with the miracle itself, as it really happened.

It's important to know their opinions not only for these purposes, but also so that we do not confuse the things which really happened with imaginary things, which were only Prophetic representations. [57] For many things are related in Scripture as real, and were even
 [III/93] believed to be real, which were, nevertheless, only representations and imaginary things, e.g., that God (the supreme being) descended from heaven (see Exodus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 5:19),²⁵ and that Mt. Sinai was smoking because God had descended upon it, surrounded with
 5 fire, and that Elijah ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot with horses of fire [2 Kings 2:11]. Of course all these things were only representations, adapted to the opinions of those who handed them down to us as represented to them, i.e., as actual things. [58] For anyone who is even a little wiser than the common people are knows that God has
 10 neither a right hand nor a left hand, that he neither moves nor is at rest, that he is not in a place, but is absolutely infinite, and that all the perfections are contained in him.²⁶ They know these things, I say, if they judge things from the perceptions of the pure intellect, and not as the imagination is affected by the external senses, as the common people usually do. That is why they imagine God as corporeal and as
 15 maintaining a kingly rule, whose throne they feign to be in the dome of heaven, above the stars, whose distance from the earth they do not

25. The first edition has Deut. 5:28, which seems to be clearly a mistake for 5:19 (in the numbering of the Hebrew Bible) or 5:22 (in the numbering of English versions).

26. Although Spinoza would endorse the conception of God which he here contrasts with that of the common people, his rejection of the anthropomorphism of Scripture (and of popular conceptions of God) is common among philosophical theologians. Cf., for example, Maimonides' comments on the biblical passages which seem to imply that God has a place, and may move from one place to another, in the *Guide* I, 8–10. See also his comments on the Talmudic saying, "The Torah speaks in the language of the sons of man," in *Guide* I, 26. That God is absolutely infinite—i.e., has infinitely many attributes, each of which is infinite in its own kind—is a position Spinoza shares with Descartes. Cf. Descartes' discussion of the idea of God in the Third Meditation.

believe to be very great. It is to these and similar opinions (as we have said) that a great many events in Scripture are adapted, which therefore ought not to be accepted by Philosophers as real.

[59] Finally, to understand miracles as they really happened, it is important to know the Hebrews' expressions and figures of speech.²⁷ For whoever does not attend sufficiently to them will ascribe to Scripture many miracles which its writers never intended to relate, so that he will know nothing at all, not only about the things and miracles as they really happened, but also about the mind of the authors of the sacred texts.

[60] For example, Zechariah, speaking in 14:7 of a future battle, says והיה יום אחד הוא יודע ליהוה לא יום ולא לילה והיה לעת ערב יהיה אור *and there shall be one day, known only to God, (for there will be) neither day nor night, but in the evening there will be light.* With these words he seems to predict a great miracle, but all he means is that for a whole day the battle will be in doubt, and its outcome known only to God, and that they will win victory in the evening. For the Prophets were accustomed to use expressions of that kind to write about and predict the victories and defeats of nations.

[61] In the same way we see Isaiah, who in 13:[10] depicts the destruction of Babylon thus: כי כוכבי השמים וכסיליהם לא יהלו אורם חשך השמש כי כוכבי השמים וכסיליהם לא יהלו אורם חשך השמש *since the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light, the sun will grow dark in its rising, and the moon will not give forth the brightness of its light.* I don't think anyone believes that this happened in the destruction of that state, or that those other things happened which he soon adds, viz. על כן שמים ארגזו ותרעש הארץ *therefore I shall make the heavens tremble and the earth will be moved from its place.*²⁸

[62] So also in 48:21, to signify to the Jews that they would return safely from Babylon to Jerusalem, and that they would not suffer from thirst on the journey, Isaiah says ולא צמאו בחרבות הולכיכם מים מצור הזיל למו *and they did not thirst, he led them through the deserts, he made water flow from the rock for them, he split open the rock and the waters flowed.* By these words he means only that the Jews, as happens, will find springs in the deserts, from which they will quench their thirst. For when, with Cyrus' agreement, they made their way to Jerusalem, it is apparent that no such miracles happened to them.

[63] In this way a great many things happen in the Sacred Texts which were only a manner of speaking among the Jews. There is no

27. Cf. Maimonides *Guide* II, 47.

28. Isa. 13:13. Maimonides uses these examples to make the same point in *Guide* II, 29 (Gebhardt V, 41).

need to recount them all separately here. But I do want to make this general point: in using these habitual expressions the Hebrews were speaking not only eloquently, but also, and mainly, in a spirit of devotion. That is why *to bless God* is found in the Sacred Texts in place of
 20 *to curse God* (see 1 Kings 21:10 and Job 2:9). That's also the reason why they referred all things to God, and why Scripture seems to relate nothing but miracles, even when it speaks of the most natural things.²⁹ We've already given several examples of this above. So we must believe that when Scripture says that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh
 25 [e.g., in Exodus 4:21, 7:3], that means nothing but that Pharaoh was obstinate. And when it is said that God opens the windows of heaven [Genesis 7:11], that means only that it rained very hard, and similarly with other things.

[64] If you attend thoroughly to these things, and to the fact that Scripture relates many things very briefly, without any circumstances, and in a way almost mutilated, you will find almost nothing in Scripture
 30 which can be demonstrated to be contrary to the light of nature; on the other hand, with moderate reflection you will be able to understand, and interpret easily, many things which seemed most obscure. With this I think I've shown clearly enough what I intended to.

[65] Before I end this chapter, there's something else I want to note. I've proceeded regarding miracles according to a method completely
 [III/95] different from the one I followed regarding Prophecy. Concerning Prophecy I affirmed nothing but what I could infer from foundations revealed in the Sacred Texts. But here I've elicited the main points only from principles known to the natural light. I did this deliberately. For since Prophecy surpasses man's power of understanding, and is a purely
 5 Theological question, I could affirm nothing about it, nor even know in what it chiefly consisted, except from the foundations which have been revealed. I was compelled to put together a history of Prophecy, and to formulate certain doctrines from it, which would teach me the nature and properties of Prophecy, as far as this can be done.

10 [66] But concerning miracles what we are asking is completely philosophical: can we grant that something happens in nature contrary to its laws, or something which couldn't follow from them? So I didn't need anything like that. Indeed, I thought it wiser to unravel this question according to foundations known to the natural light, as those which
 15 are most known. I say that I thought it wiser, for I could easily have resolved it solely from the doctrines and foundations of Scripture. To make this evident to everyone, I shall show it here briefly.

29. Cf. Maimonides *Guide* II, 48 (Gebhardt V, 42).

[67] In certain passages³⁰ Scripture affirms of nature in general that it observes a fixed and immutable order. For example, see Psalm 148:6
 20 and Jeremiah 31:35–36. Moreover, the Philosopher³¹ teaches most clearly in Ecclesiastes 1:10 that nothing new happens in nature. And illustrating this same point in vv. 11–12,³² he says that although sometimes something happens which seems new, nevertheless it is not new, but happened in ages past of which there is no memory. For as he says,
 25 there is no remembrance of things past among us today, nor will there be any remembrance of today's events among those who come after us. [68] Again, he says in 3:11 that God has ordered all things well in their time, and in 3:14 he says that he knows that whatever God makes will remain to eternity, and that nothing can be added to it or subtracted from it. All these passages teach very clearly that nature observes a
 30 fixed and immutable order, that God has been the same in all ages, both those known to us and those unknown, that the laws of nature are so perfect and fruitful that nothing can be added to them or taken away from them, and finally, that miracles are seen as something new only because of men's ignorance.

[69] Scripture, then, teaches these things explicitly, but nowhere does it teach that anything happens in nature which is contrary to its laws,
 [III/96] or which cannot follow from them. So these things ought not to be ascribed to Scripture. To this we may add that miracles require causes and circumstances—as we have already shown [§§39–51]—and that they do not follow from I know not what kingly rule which the common
 5 people ascribe to God, but from his command and divine decree, i.e.,—as we have also shown from Scripture itself [§§52–64?]³³—from the laws of nature and its order, and finally, that miracles can also be performed by those who seduce the people, as is proven by Deuteronomy 13[:1–5] and Matthew 24:24.

[70] From these conclusions it follows with utmost clarity that miracles were natural events, and hence, that they are to be explained in
 10 such a way that they do not seem to be something new (to use Solomon's term) or to be contrary to nature. If possible, they should be explained in such a way that they seem to be very much in agreement

30. As Joël noted (1870), Maimonides discusses the passages cited in this paragraph in his *Guide* II, 28. Maimonides reminds us that some wished to suppress the book of Ecclesiastes as heretical.

31. A reference to Solomon. Cf. ii, 48n. The author of Ecclesiastes is identified in the first verse as Qoheleth, “the son of David, king in Jerusalem.” Qoheleth has usually been taken to mean “the Preacher,” or “the Teacher,” or more generally, “one who speaks to an assembly.” Spinoza's identification of him as a philosopher is presumably based on his assumption that the author was Solomon and on Solomon's reputation for wisdom.

32. It seems that Spinoza's reference would more logically be to vv. 9–11.

with natural things. That everyone may be able to do this more easily, I have passed on certain rules derived solely from Scripture.³³ [71] But though I say Scripture teaches these things, I don't mean by that that it teaches them as lessons necessary for salvation, only that the Prophets embraced the same things we do. So everyone is free to judge of these things as he thinks best for himself, for the purpose of entering wholeheartedly into the worship of God and religion.

[72] Josephus agrees, for he writes as follows at the end of Book II of his *Antiquities*:

Let no one resist the word miracle, if a safe passage was made through the sea for these ancient men, free of wickedness, whether this was done by the will of God or of its own accord; once the Pamphylian sea was also divided for those who were with Alexander, king of Macedon, and when there was no other way, it offered a passage to them, it being God's will to destroy the Persian empire through him. Everyone who writes about Alexander's deeds admits this. So anyone may judge these things as he pleases.³⁴

These are the words of Josephus, and his judgment concerning belief in miracles.

[III/97]

CHAPTER VII

On the Interpretation of Scripture

[1] Everyone says that Sacred Scripture is the word of God, which teaches men true blessedness or the way to salvation. But their deeds reveal a completely different view. For the common people seem to care

33. I think that by the "rules derived from Scripture" Spinoza is referring to the points about Hebrew ways of speaking made in §§59–64.

34. Josephus, *Antiquities* II, xvi, 5, discussing the parting of the Red Sea. Shirley (2002) points out that Spinoza quotes Josephus from a fifteenth-century Latin translation by Rufinus Aquileiensis which was in his library, and which uses a phrase which makes no sense. Rather than go back to Josephus' Greek, I've followed ALM in omitting the unintelligible phrase, which seems inessential to Spinoza's point. Thackeray (LCL edition of Josephus) observes that the concluding sentence is a standard formula Josephus uses whenever he recounts a miracle. See his comment on i, 108, where the issue is the longevity of the biblical patriarchs. He reports that by the second century C.E. "this non-committal attitude to the marvellous had become a rule for historians," citing a passage from Lucian which reads (in the Fowler translation): "It may occasionally happen that some extraordinary story has to be introduced; it should be simply narrated, without guarantee of its truth, thrown down for anyone to make what he can of it; the writer takes no risks and shows no preference" (Lucian 1905, II, §60).

nothing about living according to the teachings of Sacred Scripture. We see that almost everyone peddles his own inventions as the word of God,¹ concerned only to compel others to think as he does, under the pretext of religion. [2] We see that the Theologians have mainly
 10 been anxious to twist their own inventions and fancies out of the Sacred Texts, to fortify them with divine authority. There's nothing they do with less scruple, or greater recklessness, than interpret Scripture *or* the mind of the Holy Spirit. If they're worried about anything, it's not that they fear they may ascribe some error to the holy Spirit and stray
 15 from the path to salvation, but that others may convict them of error, trampling on their authority and exposing them to scorn.

[3] But if men were sincere in what they say about Scripture, they would live very differently. These disagreements wouldn't upset them so often; they wouldn't quarrel with such hatred; and they wouldn't be
 20 in the grip of such a blind and reckless desire to interpret Scripture and think up new doctrines in Religion. On the contrary, they wouldn't dare to embrace anything as the teaching of Scripture which it doesn't teach with the greatest possible clarity. And finally, those sacrilegious people who have not been afraid to corrupt Scripture in so many pas-
 25 sages would have taken great care to avoid such a crime, and would have kept their sacrilegious hands away from those texts.²

[4] But in the end ambition and wickedness have been so powerful that religion is identified not so much with obeying the Holy Spirit as with defending human inventions, so that religion consists not in loving-kindness, but in spreading dissension among men, and in propa-
 30 gating the most bitter hatred, which they shield under the false name of religious zeal and passionate devotion. To these evils we may add superstition, which teaches men to scorn reason and nature, and to
 [III/98] admire and venerate only what is contrary to both of these.

[5] So it's no wonder that to admire and venerate Scripture more, men have been eager to explain it in a way that makes it seem as contrary as possible to both reason and nature. They dream that the most profound mysteries lie hidden in the Sacred Texts, wear themselves
 5 out searching for these absurdities, neglecting the rest, which are useful. Whatever they invent in their madness they attribute to the Holy Spirit, and strive to defend with the utmost force and violent affects. That's how men are made: what they conceive by the pure intellect,

1. A recurrence of the theme first mentioned in the Preface, §20, which will return in xiv, 1.

2. A recurrence of the theme first mentioned in vi, 51. Gebhardt argues that Spinoza's reference to sacrilegious men is aimed at the Pharisees, appealing to a report by Salomon van Til (V, 43–44). ALM are skeptical.

they defend only with the intellect and reason; but what they think
10 because of affects of the heart, they defend with those affects.

[6] To extricate ourselves from these confusions, to free our minds
from theological prejudices, and to stop recklessly embracing men's
inventions as divine teachings, we must treat the true method of inter-
preting Scripture and discussing it. For as long as we are ignorant of
15 this, we cannot know anything with certainty about what either Scripture
or the Holy Spirit wishes to teach.

To sum up briefly, I say that the method of interpreting Scripture
does not differ at all from the method of interpreting nature, but agrees
with it completely. [7] For the method of interpreting nature consists
20 above all in putting together a history of nature, from which, as from
certain data, we infer the definitions of natural things. In the same way,
to interpret Scripture it is necessary to prepare a straightforward his-
tory of Scripture and to infer from it the mind of Scripture's authors,
by legitimate inferences, as from certain data and principles. [8] For
25 in this way everyone—provided he has admitted no other principles or
data for interpreting Scripture and discussing it than those drawn from
Scripture itself and its history—everyone will always proceed without
danger of error. He will be able to discuss the things which surpass
our grasp as safely as those we know by the natural light.

30 [9] But to establish clearly that this way is not only certain, but
also the only way, and that it agrees with the method of interpreting
nature, we must note that Scripture most often treats things which
cannot be deduced from principles known to the natural light. For
historical narratives and revelations make up the greatest part of it.

[10] But the historical narratives give a prominent place to miracles,
[III/99] i.e., (as we showed in the last Chapter) narratives of unusual events in
nature, accommodated to the opinions and judgments of the historians
who wrote them. Moreover, the revelations were also accommodated
to the opinions of the Prophets (as we showed in the second Chapter);
5 they really surpass man's power of understanding. So the knowledge of
all these things, i.e., of almost everything in Scripture, must be sought
only from Scripture itself, just as the knowledge of nature must be
sought from nature itself.

[11] As for the moral teachings also contained in the Bible, although
they can be demonstrated from common notions, still, it cannot be
10 demonstrated from these notions that Scripture teaches them. This can
only be established from Scripture itself. Indeed, if we want to testify,
without prejudice, to the divinity of Scripture, we must establish from
Scripture alone that it teaches true moral doctrines. For only from this
can its divinity be demonstrated. We have shown that the Prophets'

15 certainty is known chiefly from the fact that they had a heart inclined toward the right and the good.³ So it's necessary to establish the same thing for us also, if we're to be able to have faith in them.⁴

[12] Moreover, we've also demonstrated already that the divinity of God cannot be proven by miracles (not to mention that miracles could
20 also be performed by false Prophets). So the divinity of Scripture must be established only by the fact that it teaches true virtue. But this can only be established by Scripture. If it could not be done, it would only be as a result of great prejudice that we would embrace it and testify to its divinity. Therefore, all knowledge of Scripture must be sought only from Scripture itself.⁵

25 [13] Finally, Scripture does not give definitions of the things of which it speaks, any more than nature does. So just as the definitions of natural things are to be inferred from the different actions of nature, in the same way [the definitions of the things spoken of in Scripture] are to be drawn from the different narratives occurring in the Texts concerning them.

30 [14] Therefore, the universal rule in interpreting Scripture is to attribute nothing to Scripture as its teaching which we have not understood as clearly as possible from its history. What sort of history must that be? What must it chiefly relate? These are the questions we must now answer.⁶

3. Spinoza refers here to ii, 4–10, where he had argued that, in addition to a sign, the moral rectitude of the prophet was a necessary condition for his certainty regarding the truth of the prophetic message.

4. I take this to mean that if we are to have confidence in the truth of the moral teachings we find in Scripture, we must first establish that our hearts are inclined toward the right and the good. If we assume that knowing that our hearts are so inclined requires at least a basic knowledge of the right and the good, this seems to entail that Scripture cannot be our sole, or even most fundamental, source of moral knowledge.

5. That our knowledge of Scripture must be sought only from Scripture itself is a fundamental Reformation principle, advocated by both Luther and Calvin, for whom it was essential in maintaining the status of Scripture as the final authority in matters of Christian doctrine. Cf. Althaus 1966, ch. 9, and John Thomson, ch. 4 in McKim 2004. See also the Westminster Confession, I, ix: "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself: and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly." Note that this rule of interpretation assumes the fundamental consistency of Scripture, a principle Spinoza rejected as an *a priori* assumption in the Preface, §19.

6. Spinoza's requirements for a history of Scripture are set out in three sections of unequal length. First, it must contain an account of the nature and properties of the language of Scripture (§15); next, it must contain a subject index (§§16–22); and finally, it must contain an account of the authorship, intended audience, reception, transmission, and canonization of the work (§23). This history of Scripture only provides us with the tools we need to apply the method for interpreting Scripture which Spinoza will expound in §§27–37. It is not evident that we can compile a history of Scripture, in the sense

[15] First, it must contain the nature and properties of the language in which the books of Scripture were written, and which their Authors [III/100] were accustomed to speak. For in this way we shall be able to find out all the meanings each utterance can admit in ordinary conversational usage. And because all the writers, both of the Old Testament and the New, were Hebrews, it's certain that the History of the Hebrew language is necessary above all others, not only for understanding the books of the Old Testament, which were written in this language, but also for understanding those of the New. For though they've been circulated in other languages, nevertheless they are expressed in a Hebrew manner.⁷

[16] Second, it must collect the sentences of each book and organize them under main headings so that we can readily find all those concerning the same subject. Next, it must note all those which are ambiguous or obscure or which seem inconsistent with one another. When I call these sentences clear or obscure here, I mean that it is easy or difficult to derive their meaning from the context of the utterance, not that it is easy or difficult to perceive their truth by reason. For we are concerned only with the meaning of the utterances, not with their truth. [17] Indeed, we must take great care, so long as we are looking for the meaning of Scripture, not to be predisposed by our own reasoning, insofar as it is founded on the principles of natural knowledge (not to mention now our prejudices). In order not to confuse the true meaning with the truth of things, we must seek that meaning solely from linguistic usage, or from reasoning which recognizes no other foundation than Scripture.⁸

To make this clearer, I'll illustrate with an example. [18] These sentences of Moses—that *God is a fire* and that *God is jealous*⁹—are as clear as possible, so long as we attend only to the meaning of the words. So I count them among the clear sentences, even though they

Spinoza has in mind, consistently with the principle that our knowledge of Scripture must be derived only from Scripture itself.

7. Note that Spinoza does not *say* that the New Testament was *written* in a language other than Hebrew, only that it *circulated* in such a language. Apparently he does not say it was written in Greek because he does not believe that. See ADN. XXVI, attached to xi, 3. The adnotations were not published until after Spinoza's death. In some cases—notably, ADN. XXI—they contain material Spinoza seems to have regarded as highly sensitive, and perhaps dangerous to publish during his lifetime.

8. Here Spinoza applies the principle, announced in the Preface, §19, that we must not assume, in advance of determining the meaning of Scripture, that it is true and divine. We must first determine what Scripture means, and then make whatever inferences seem appropriate about its truth and divinity.

9. Both claims are made in Deut. 4:24. See also Exod. 20:5, 34:14; Deut. 5:9; and—to take a New Testament text which Spinoza believes was originally written in Hebrew (vii, 64)—Heb. 12:29.

25 are very obscure in relation to truth and reason. Indeed, although their literal meaning is contrary to the natural light, we must still retain that literal meaning, unless it is also clearly opposed to the principles and foundations derived from the history of Scripture. And conversely, if
30 we find that these sentences, in their literal interpretation, are contrary to principles derived from Scripture, they would still have to be interpreted differently (i.e., metaphorically), even though they agreed completely with reason.

[19] So to know whether Moses believed that God is a fire, we must in no way infer our answer from the fact that this sentence [taken literally] agrees with reason or is contrary to it. Instead, we must rely only
[III/101] on other statements Moses himself made. Since Moses teaches clearly, in a great many places, that God has no likeness to any visible things in the heavens, on the earth, or in the sea,¹⁰ we must give a metaphorical explanation, either of this sentence or of all of the others. [20] But we
5 ought to depart from the literal meaning as little as possible. So we must first ask whether this one sentence, *God is a fire*, admits another meaning beyond the literal one, i.e., whether the term *fire* means something other than natural fire. If linguistic usage does not show that that term
10 can signify something else, then we must not interpret this sentence in any other way, no matter how contrary it may be to reason. Instead, we would have to accommodate the others [which say or entail that God is not a fire] to this one, however much the other statements agree with reason.

[21] But if linguistic usage does not offer us an alternative meaning, then these sentences would be irreconcilable, and we would have to
15 suspend judgment about them. However, because the term *fire* is also taken for anger and jealousy (see Job 31:12), these sentences of Moses are easily reconciled, and we legitimately infer that these two sentences, *God is a fire* and *God is jealous*, are one and the same [i.e., make one and the same statement].

[22] Next, since Moses clearly teaches that God is jealous, and nowhere teaches that God lacks passions *or* passive states of mind, from
20 this we must conclude without reservation that Moses believed this, or at least that he wished to teach it, however much we may believe that this opinion is contrary to reason.¹¹ For as we've already shown, it's not

10. Cf. ii, 36 and 43. When Maimonides defends the claim that God has no likeness to any existing thing (*Guide* I, 55), his scriptural evidence comes from Isaiah (40:18, 25) and Jeremiah (10:6), not any books Moses is supposed to have written. He might have cited Exod. 8:10, 9:14, 15:11, or Deut. 33:26, 29.

11. ALM note two passages in the *Metaphysical Thoughts* where Spinoza explains why it might be thought contrary to reason to ascribe passions to God: in CM ii, 4, he

permissible for us to twist the meaning of Scripture according to the dictates of our reason and according to our preconceived opinions. Our whole knowledge of the Bible must be sought from the Bible alone.

[23] Finally, this history must describe fully, with respect to all the books of the Prophets, the circumstances of which a record has been preserved, viz. the life, character, and concerns of the author of each book, who he was, on what occasion he wrote, at what time, for whom and finally, in what language. Next, it must relate the fate of each book: how it was first received, into whose hands it fell, how many different readings of it there were, by whose deliberation it was accepted among the sacred books, and finally, how all the books which everyone now acknowledges to be sacred came to be unified into one corpus.

The history of Scripture, I say, must contain all these things. [24] For [III/102] to know which sentences are put forward as laws and which as moral teachings, it's important to know the life, character, and concerns of the author. Moreover, the better we know someone's spirit and mentality, the more easily we can explain his words. Next, if we're not to confuse eternal teachings with those which could be useful only for a time or only for a few people, it's important also to know on what occasion, at what time, and for which nation or age all these teachings were written.

[25] Finally, it's important to know the other things I've also mentioned, in order to know, in addition to the authority of each book, whether it could have been corrupted by falsifying hands, and whether errors have crept in, and whether they have been corrected by men sufficiently expert and worthy of trust.¹² We absolutely need to know all these things, so that we may embrace only what is certain and indubitable, and not be carried away by a blind impulse to accept whatever has been thrust upon us.

[26] Once we have this history of Scripture, and have firmly resolved to maintain nothing as certainly the teaching of the Prophets unless it follows from this history, or is derived from it as clearly as possible, then it will be time for us to prepare to investigate the intentions of the

argues that God cannot be changed by an external cause; and in CM ii, 8, he argues that we speak improperly if we say that God hates some things and loves others. In the *Ethics* Spinoza will argue, not only that God is without passions, but more generally, that he does not have any affects of joy or sadness, even active ones (V P17). Spinoza will return to this example in xv, 15.

12. Gebhardt (V, 45–46) calls attention to a passage from the epilogue of Ludwig Meyer's *Philosophy the Interpreter of Holy Scripture* which makes it clear that he and Spinoza were both concerned with this issue. See Meyer 1666, 231. Totaro (vii, n. 40) cites an interesting passage from Richard Simon's *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, in which he concedes that there have been many changes made in the texts by later authors, but claims that this fact does not impugn the authority of Scripture, because the authors of these changes were inspired by God (Simon 1678, Préface, a2).

Prophets and the Holy Spirit. To do this we also need a method and
 20 order like the one we use for interpreting nature according to its history.

[27] In examining natural things we strive to investigate first the
 things most universal and common to the whole of nature: motion
 and rest, and their laws and rules, which nature always observes and
 through which it continuously acts. From these we proceed gradually
 25 to other, less universal things.¹³ In the same way, the first thing we must
 seek from the history of Scripture is what is most universal, what is
 the basis and foundation of the whole of Scripture, and finally, what all
 the Prophets commend in it as an eternal teaching, most useful for all
 30 mortals. For example, that a unique and omnipotent God exists, who
 alone is to be worshipped, who cares for all, and who loves above all
 those who worship him and who love their neighbor as themselves, etc.¹⁴

[28] Scripture, I say, teaches these and similar things everywhere, so
 clearly and so explicitly that there has never been anyone who disputed
 the meaning of Scripture concerning these things. But what God is,
 [III/103] and in what way he sees all things, and provides for them— these and
 similar things Scripture does not teach explicitly and as an eternal doc-
 trine. On the contrary, we have already shown above that the Prophets
 themselves did not agree about them. So concerning such things we
 must maintain nothing as the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, even if it
 5 can be determined very well by the natural light.

[29] Once we rightly know this universal teaching of Scripture, we
 must next proceed to other, less universal things, which nevertheless
 concern how we ordinarily conduct our lives and which flow from
 this universal teaching like streams. Examples would include all the
 particular external actions of true virtue, which can only be put into
 10 practice when the occasion for them arises. Whatever is found to be
 obscure *or* ambiguous in the Texts about these things must be explained
 and determined according to the universal teaching of Scripture. But
 if we find any things which are contrary to one another, we must see
 on what occasion, and at what time, and for whom they were written.

[30] For example, when Christ says *blessed are those who mourn, for*
 15 *they shall receive comfort* [Matthew 5:4], we do not know from this Text
 what kind of mourner he means. But because he teaches later that we
 should be apprehensive about nothing except the kingdom of God

13. Cf. Spinoza's geometric exposition of Cartesian physics, in Part II of his *Descartes'* *"Principles of Philosophy"* (in Volume I of this edition, pp. 262ff.).

14. Here, and later, in xii, 34–36, Spinoza will give the impression that the prophets consistently taught monotheism. *Prima facie* this is inconsistent with his attribution of monolatry to Moses in ii, 37. But this passage does neatly express his preference for the teachings of the later prophets.

and his justice, which he commends as the supreme good (see Matthew 6:33), from this it follows that by mourners he understands only those who mourn for the kingdom of God and the justice men have neglected. For this is the only thing they can mourn, who love nothing
 20 but the divine kingdom *or* righteousness, and who completely disdain what fortune may bring.

[31] So also, when he says *to a man who strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also*, and what follows [Matthew 5:39ff.]. If Christ had ordered this to judges, as a Lawgiver, he would have destroyed the
 25 law of Moses with this precept. Nevertheless, he advises us expressly that this is not his intention. See Matthew 5:17. So we must consider who said these things, to whom they were said, and when.

[32] It was Christ who spoke. And he did not institute laws as a lawgiver; instead as a teacher he taught lessons, because (as we have shown above)¹⁵ he did not want to correct external actions so much as
 30 the heart. Secondly, he said these things to oppressed men, who were living in a corrupt republic, where justice was completely neglected. Finally, he said it at a time when he saw that the ruin of the republic was near at hand.¹⁶ But we have seen that the very same thing Christ teaches here, when the ruin of the City is at hand, Jeremiah¹⁷ also taught at the first destruction of the City, i.e., at a similar time (see Lamentations 3:25–30). [33] So the Prophets taught this only in a
 [III/104] time of oppression, and nowhere put it forward as a law. By contrast, Moses, who wasn't writing at a time of oppression, but (note this) was working for the institution of a good republic, commanded that an eye be paid for an eye¹⁸—although he also condemned vengeance and hatred of one's neighbor.

5 From this it follows very clearly, just from the fundamental principles of Scripture, that this teaching of Christ and Jeremiah that we should submit to injuries, and yield to the impious in everything, is appropriate only in those places where justice is neglected and in times of oppression, but not in a good republic. Indeed, in a good republic, where
 10 justice is preserved, everyone is bound, if he wants to be thought just, to exact a penalty for injuries in the presence of a judge (see Leviticus 5:1)—not for the sake of vengeance (see Leviticus 19:17–18), but with the intention of defending justice and the laws of one's native land, and

15. See iv, 30–34; v, 8–9.

16. Perhaps a reference to Luke 19:41–44.

17. A tradition which goes back as far as the Septuagint identifies Jeremiah as the author of Lamentations, but modern critical scholarship is “practically unanimous” in rejecting this view. See ABD IV, 138.

18. Cf. Exod. 21:23–25, Lev. 24:19–20, Deut. 19:21.

so that the evil should not profit by being evil.¹⁹ [34] All these things also agree completely with natural reason.

I could cite many other examples in this manner, but I think these
 15 will suffice to explain what I intend, and how useful this method is. That's all I care about for the present. But so far we have taught only the method of investigating those statements of Scripture which concern the way we should conduct our lives, and which therefore can be investigated more easily. For really there was never any dispute among the Writers of the Bible on these matters.

20 [35] The other things which occur in the Texts, which are matters of pure speculation, cannot be investigated so easily. For the path to these is narrower. As we've already shown,²⁰ the Prophets disagreed among themselves in speculative matters, and their narrations of things were very much accommodated to the prejudices of each age. So it is not at
 25 all permissible for us to infer or explain the intention of one Prophet from the clearer passages of another, unless it is established with the utmost clarity that they both favored one and the same opinion.

[36] Therefore I shall now explain briefly how in such matters the intention of the Prophets is to be unearthed from the history of Scripture. Concerning these matters too, we must begin with the things
 30 which are most universal, inquiring first from the clearest statements of Scripture, to find out what Prophecy *or* revelation is, and in what it chiefly consists. Next we must ask what a miracle is, and so on, with the things which are most common. From there we must descend to the opinions of each Prophet. And from these things finally we must proceed to the meaning of each revelation *or* Prophecy, of each story,
 [III/105] and of each miracle.

[37] We must use great caution here not to confuse the intention of the Prophets and Historians with that of the Holy Spirit or with the truth of the matter. We've shown this already in the appropriate places, with many examples. So I don't consider it necessary to discuss these things at greater length. Still, there's one point we must make
 5 about the meaning of revelations: this method teaches us only how to seek out what the Prophets really saw or heard, not what they wanted to signify or represent by those symbols. For we can conjecture this, but not deduce it with certainty from the foundations of Scripture.

[38] We've shown, then, the way to interpret Scripture, and at the
 10 same time demonstrated that this is the only way to find its true meaning

19. ALM note a reminiscence here of a line from Terence's *Phormio*, which might be translated: "It's our fault if it profits the evil to be evil because we are too eager to be called good and kind" (766).

20. See ii, 24–52.

with great certainty. Of course, if anyone has a certain tradition about this, *or* a true explanation received from the Prophets themselves (as the Pharisees claim), I concede that he is more certain of the meaning of Scripture. Similarly, if anyone has a High Priest who cannot err
 15 concerning the interpretation of Scripture (as the Roman Catholics boast). [39] Nevertheless, since we cannot be certain, either of this tradition or of the authority of the High Priest, we also cannot found anything certain on these things. For the most ancient Sects of the Christians denied [the authority of the Pope], and the most ancient Sects of the Jews denied [the Pharisaic tradition]. Moreover—not to
 20 mention other objections now—if we pay attention to the chronology the Pharisees received from their Rabbis, by which they extend this tradition all the way back to Moses, we shall find that it is false, as I show elsewhere.²¹

[40] So a tradition like that must be very suspect to us. It's true that in our Method we are compelled to suppose that one tradition of the
 25 Jews is uncorrupted: the meaning of the words of the Hebrew language, which we have accepted from them. But though we don't doubt that tradition at all, we still doubt the tradition [about the meaning of passages in Scripture]. For it could never be to anyone's advantage to change the meaning of a word; but it could often be to someone's advantage
 30 to change the meaning of an utterance. [41] It's extremely difficult to change the meaning of a word. Anyone who tried to do this would be forced, as part of the process, to explain all the authors who wrote in that language and used that word in its accepted meaning. Either he would have to do this according to the temperament and mind of each author, or else he would have to distort them very carefully.

[42] Moreover, both the common people and the learned preserve language; but only the learned preserve books and the meanings of utterances. So we can easily conceive that the learned could have
 [III/106] changed or corrupted the meaning of an utterance in some very rare book which they had in their 'power,'²² but not that they could have changed the meaning of words. Moreover, if someone wants to change the meaning of some word to which he has become accustomed, it will be difficult for him to observe the new meaning afterward both in
 5 speaking and in writing. [43] These and other reasons easily persuade us that it could not occur to anyone to corrupt a language, but that it

21. See the discussion of chronological issues which begins in ix, 8.

22. Reminiscent of Hobbes, *Leviathan* xxxiii, 20, which raises a concern about the possibility of falsification of the text of the New Testament by the ecclesiastics who had control of the texts, but dismisses it (ironically, I think), on the ground that if they had been inclined to falsify the texts, they would have made them more favorable to their power.

could often occur to someone to corrupt the intention of a Writer by changing his utterances or by misinterpreting them.

This method of ours, founded on the principle that the knowledge
 10 of Scripture is to be sought only from Scripture, is the only true
 method [of interpreting Scripture]. So whatever it cannot furnish for
 acquiring a complete knowledge of Scripture, we must absolutely give
 up as hopeless. [44] But now we must say what difficulty this method
 involves, or what is to be desired in it, for it to be able to lead us to a
 complete and certain knowledge of the Sacred Texts.

15 To begin with, a great difficulty in this method arises from the fact
 that it requires a complete knowledge of the Hebrew language. But where
 is this now to be sought? [45] Those who spoke and wrote Hebrew in
 ancient times left nothing to posterity regarding its foundations and
 teaching. Or at least we have absolutely nothing from them: no Dic-
 20 tionary, no Grammar, no Rhetoric. Moreover, the Hebrew nation has
 lost all its marks of distinction and honor—this is no wonder, after it
 has suffered so many disasters and persecutions—and has retained only
 some few fragments of its language and of a few books. For almost all
 the names of fruits, birds, fish, and many other things have perished in
 25 the injustice of the ages. Again, the meaning of many nouns and verbs
 which occur in the Bible is either completely unknown or is disputed.

[46] We lack, not only all these things, but also and especially, a
 phraseology of this language. For time, the devourer, has obliterated
 from the memory of men almost all the idioms and manners of speak-
 ing peculiar to the Hebrew nation. Therefore, we will not always be
 30 able, as we desire, to find out, with respect to each utterance, all the
 meanings it can admit according to linguistic usage. Many utterances
 will occur whose meaning will be very obscure, indeed, completely
 incomprehensible, even though they are expressed in well-known terms.

[47] In addition to the fact that we cannot have a complete history
 of the Hebrew language, there is the very nature and constitution of
 [III/107] this language. So many ambiguities arise from this that it is impossible
 to devise a method^{23**} which will teach you how to find out with cer-
 tainty the true meaning of all the utterances of Scripture. For besides
 the causes of ambiguity common to all languages there are certain
 others in this language from which a great many ambiguities are born.
 5 I consider it worth the trouble to note these here.

[48] First, ambiguity and obscurity of utterances often arises in the
 Bible because the letters of the same organ are confused. The Hebrews

23. **[ADN. VII] That is, for those of us who are not accustomed to this language
 and who are not familiar with its ways of speaking.

divide all the letters of the Alphabet into five classes according to the five parts of the mouth used in pronunciation: the lips, the tongue, the teeth, the palate, and the throat. E.g., *aleph*, א, *bet*, ב, *ayin*, ע, and *he*, ה, are called gutturals and are used for one another without any distinction, or at least without any known to us. So לֵא, *el*, which means *to*, is often taken for עַל, *hgal*, which means *over*, and vice versa. As a result, all the parts of an utterance are often made either ambiguous or sounds which have no meaning.

[49] A second cause of the ambiguity of utterances is the multiple meanings which conjunctions and adverbs have. For example, וּ, *vau*, is used indiscriminately for conjoining and disjoining and means *and*, *but*, *because*, *also*, *then*. כִּי, *ki*, has seven or eight meanings: *because*, *although*, *if*, *when*, *as*, *that*, *burning*, etc. Almost all the particles are like this.

[50] A third cause, which is the source of many ambiguities, is that the verbs in the Indicative lack the Present, Imperfect, Pluperfect, Future perfect, and other tenses commonly used in other languages. Moreover, in the Imperative and the Infinitive, they lack all except the Present; and in the Subjunctive, they lack all tenses without exception. And although all these defects of Tenses and Moods could easily—indeed, with the greatest elegance—have been made up by certain rules deduced from the foundations of the language, nevertheless, the most ancient writers completely neglected them, and indiscriminately used the Future tense for the Present and the Past, and on the other hand, the Past for the Future, and the Indicative for the Imperative and Subjunctive. This causes great ambiguity in the utterances.

[51] In addition to these three causes of ambiguity in the Hebrew language, there are still two others to be noted, each of which is of far greater importance. First, the Hebrews do not have letters for vowels. [III/108] Second, they were not accustomed to use any signs [of punctuation] to separate their utterances, or to make their meaning more explicit *or* emphasize them. [52] And although the lack of these two, viz. vowels and signs of punctuation, is usually made up by points and accents, nevertheless we cannot trust these, since they have been devised and established by men of a later age, whose authority ought to be worth nothing to us. The ancients wrote without points (i.e., without vowels and accents), as is established by many testimonies. Those who came later added these two things, as it seemed to them proper to interpret the Bible. So the accents and points which we have now are only modern interpretations, and do not deserve any more trust or authority than any other explanations of the authors.

[53] Those who don't know this and also don't know how they ought to excuse the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who (in 11:21)

interprets the text of Genesis 47:31 very differently than it is taken
 15 in the pointed Hebrew text, as if the Apostle ought to have learned
 the meaning of Scripture from those who added the points. To me,
 of course, it seems rather that those who added the points are to be
 blamed. So that everyone may see this, and at the same time see that
 this discrepancy has arisen only from the lack of vowels, I shall set out
 each of the two interpretations.

[54] Those who added the points, by their points, interpreted the
 20 text to read *and Israel bent over*, or (changing *ayin*, ע, to *aleph*, א, a letter
 of the same organ) *toward the head of the bed*. But the Author of the
 letter interpreted the text to read *and Israel bent over the head of his staff*,
 reading מטה, *mate* [staff], where others read מטה, *mita* [bed], a difference
 which arises only from the vowels. Now since, in that narrative, it is a
 question only of Jacob's old age, but not, as in the following chapter,
 25 of his illness, it seems really more probable that the meaning of the
 historian was that Jacob bent over the head of his staff (which elderly
 men need to hold themselves up), not over the head of the bed, especially
 since in this way it is not necessary to suppose any change of letters.

[55] By this example I didn't want just to reconcile that passage
 30 of the Letter to the Hebrews with the text of Genesis, but mainly to
 show how little trust we should put in the modern points and accents.
 Anyone who wants to interpret Scripture without prejudice is bound
 to doubt these matters, and to reexamine them.

[III/109] [56] Let's return now to our subject. From the constitution and
 nature of the Hebrew language anyone can easily conclude that so many
 ambiguities must occur that there can be no method for resolving all
 of them. We've shown that the only way of unearthing the true mean-
 5 ing from the many which linguistic usage makes possible is the mutual
 comparison of utterances. But there's no reason we should hope to be
 able to do this in every case. There are two reasons for this. First, it's
 only by chance that the comparison of utterances can throw light on
 an utterance. No Prophet wrote with the intention of explaining the
 words of another Prophet; they didn't even write to explain their own
 10 words! Second, we cannot infer the mind of one Prophet, Apostle,
 etc., from that of another except in matters concerning the conduct
 of life—not when they speak concerning speculative matters *or* when
 they relate miracles and historical narratives. We've already shown this
 quite plainly.²⁴

[57] I could show, by various examples, that there are many inexpli-
 15 cable utterances in Holy Scripture. But for the present I prefer to pass

24. See ii, 13–52.

over them, and to proceed to the other things which need to be noted: namely, what difficulty this true method of interpreting Scripture still contains, or what is lacking in it.

[58] There is yet another difficulty in this method: it requires a history of the circumstances of all the books of Scripture. For the most part we do not know this history. Either we are completely ignorant of the authors (or, if you prefer, Writers)²⁵ of many of the books, or else we have doubts about them. I shall show this fully in what follows. Moreover, for the books whose Writers we do not know, we also do not know on what occasion or at what time the books were written. In addition, we do not know into whose hands all the books fell, nor in which copies so many different readings were found, nor, finally, whether there were not many other readings in other copies.

[59] Why it matters to know all these things, I've indicated briefly in the proper place. But there I deliberately omitted certain things we now need to consider. If we read a book which contains incredible or incomprehensible things, or is written in very obscure terms, and we don't know its author, or when or on what occasion it was written, it will be pointless for us to try to become more certain of its true meaning. [60] If we're ignorant of all these things, we can't know *anything* about what the author intended, or could have intended. On the other hand, when we know these things properly, we determine our thoughts in such a way that we're not predisposed by any prejudice. So we don't attribute to the author—or to the one on whose behalf the author wrote—more or less than is just. And we don't think about any things other than those the author could have had in mind, or which the time and occasion required.

I think everyone knows this. [61] It often happens that we read similar stories in different books and make very different judgments about them, according to the different opinions we have of their writers. I know I once read in a book that a man named Orlando the furious²⁶ used to ride a winged monster in the air, that he flew over whatever regions he wanted to, and that by himself he slaughtered an immense number of men and giants. The book contained other fantasies of this

25. Bennett suggests, plausibly, that the intention may be to accommodate the traditional view that the ultimate author of Scripture was God, and that the human "writers" were no more than scribes. Cf. Maimonides' eighth fundamental principle of the Jewish religion: "We are to believe that the whole Torah was given us through Moses our Teacher entirely from God. . . . We do not know exactly how it reached us, but only that it came to us through Moses, who acted like a secretary taking dictation." Maimonides *Reader*, 420. See also below, vii, 60.

26. See Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* Canto X, 66ff. But as the commentators note, the story is that of Ruggiero, not Orlando.

kind, which are completely incomprehensible from the standpoint of the intellect. [62] I'd also read a similar story in Ovid, about Perseus,²⁷ and
 15 finally, another, in the books of Judges and Kings, about Samson, who, alone and unarmed, slaughtered thousands of men, and about Elijah, who flew through the air, and at last went up into heaven in a chariot of fire, with horses of fire.²⁸ These stories, I say, are completely similar. Nevertheless, we make a very different judgment about each of them:
 20 that the first wanted to write only trifles, the second, political matters, and the third, finally, sacred matters.²⁹ And we persuade ourselves of this only because of the opinions we have of these writers.

[63] So it's clear that for writings which are obscure or incomprehensible to the intellect, we must have some knowledge of the authors
 25 if we want to interpret their writings. And for the same reasons, when we have different versions of obscure stories, if we are to select the true reading, we need to know in whose copies the different readings are found, and whether still other readings have ever been found in the writings of other men of greater authority.

30 [64] There's one final difficulty in interpreting certain books of Scripture according to this method: we don't possess them in the same language in which they were first written. For according to the common opinion, the Gospel of Matthew, and no doubt also the Letter to the Hebrews, were written in Hebrew.³⁰ Nevertheless, these [original texts] are not extant. Moreover, regarding the book of Job there is doubt
 [III/111] about what language it was written in. In his commentaries Ibn Ezra affirms that it has been translated from another language into Hebrew, and that this is the reason for its obscurity.³¹ I say nothing about the apocryphal books, since they are of greatly different authority.

27. See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IV, 614ff.

28. The stories about Samson are in Judg. 15:15 and 16:30. The one about Elijah is in 2 Kings 2:11.

29. Appuhn took the first author referred to here to be Ariosto, and accordingly expressed surprise that Ovid should be taken to be a political writer. Droetto/Giancotti suggest that we should count Ovid (rather than Ariosto) as the first writer Spinoza is referring to, the author of Judges as the second, and the author of Kings as the third.

30. The opinions discussed here—that Matthew originally wrote his gospel in Hebrew and that the Letter to the Hebrews was also written originally in Hebrew—go back at least to Eusebius. See his *Church History* III, xxiv, 6; III, xxxix, 16; and VI, xiv, 2–3. But it seems that they no longer represent the consensus of biblical scholars. See Brown 1997, 208–12, 683–704. Eusebius and his sources are probably using the term “Hebrew” to refer to what we would now call Aramaic, the language most commonly spoken by Palestinian Jews in the first century. On this see Meyer 1896.

31. The Hebrew of the Book of Job is exceptionally difficult, with more unique or rare words than any other biblical book, words whose meaning we are often obliged to conjecture on the basis of what we know about other related languages. It also has

[65] These are all the difficulties I had undertaken to recount arising
 5 from this method of interpreting Scripture according to the history
 available to us. I consider them so great that I don't hesitate to say
 this: in a great many places either we don't know what Scripture really
 means or we're just guessing about its meaning without any certainty.

[66] On the other hand, we should note again that all these dif-
 10 ficulties can prevent us from grasping the intention of the Prophets
 only concerning things we can't perceive and can only imagine—not
 concerning things we can grasp with the intellect and easily form a clear
 concept of.^{32**} For things which by their nature are easily perceived
 can't be said so obscurely that they aren't easily understood. As the
 proverb says: to one who understands a word is enough.³³

[67] Euclid wrote only about things quite simple and most intelli-
 15 gible. Anyone can easily explain his work in any language. To grasp his
 intention and be certain of his true meaning we don't need a complete
 knowledge of the language he wrote in, but only a quite ordinary—
 almost childish!—knowledge. Nor do we need to know about his life,
 20 concerns and customs, or in what language, to whom and when he
 wrote, or the fate of his book, or its various readings, or how and by
 whose deliberation it was accepted.

[68] What I've said here about Euclid must be said about everyone
 who has written about things by their nature perceptible. So we con-
 25 clude that the history available to us is enough to enable us to easily
 grasp the intention of Scripture concerning moral teachings. In that
 area we can be certain of its true meaning. For the teachings of true
 piety are expressed in the most familiar words, since they are very
 ordinary and no less simple and easy to understand. And because true
 30 salvation and blessedness consists in true peace of mind, and we truly
 find peace only in those things we understand very clearly, [69] from
 this it follows with utmost clarity that we can grasp with certainty the
 intention of Scripture concerning things salutary and necessary for

many syntactic peculiarities. But apparently few modern scholars would explain these difficulties the way Ibn Ezra did. See Anchor Job, xlvii–l.

32. **[ADN. VIII] By things one can perceive I understand not only those legitimately demonstrated, but also those we're accustomed to embrace with moral certainty and hear without wonder, even if they can't be demonstrated in any way. Everyone grasps Euclid's propositions before they're demonstrated. Thus I also call perceptible and clear those stories of things, both future and past, which don't surpass human belief, as well as laws, institutions and customs (even if they can't be demonstrated mathematically). Those obscure symbols and stories which seem to surpass all belief, I call impossible to perceive. Still, many of these can be investigated according to our method, so that we can perceive the author's thought.

33. The proverb "A word to the wise is sufficient" occurs both in Terence (*Phormio* III, 541) and Plautus (*Persa* V, 729) (ALM).

blessedness. There's no reason why we should be apprehensive about the rest. Since for the most part we cannot embrace these other things by
 [III/112] reason and the intellect, this would show more curiosity than concern for our advantage.

With this I think I have shown the true method of interpreting Scripture and explained my opinion about it adequately. [70] No doubt everyone now sees that this method requires no light beyond the natural
 5 light itself. For the nature and excellence of this light consists above all in this: that by legitimate principles of inference it deduces and infers things obscure from things known, or given as known. Our method requires nothing else. We grant that it doesn't suffice for tracking
 10 down, with certainty, everything in the Bible. Still, that doesn't arise from any defect in the method, but from this: the way it teaches to be true and right has never been practiced or commonly used by men. So with the passage of time this way has become very difficult, and almost impenetrable. I think the difficulties I've raised establish this very clearly.

[71] Now it's time to examine the opinions of those who disagree
 15 with us. First, we must examine the opinion of those who maintain that the natural light does not have the power to interpret Scripture, but that a supernatural light is most necessary for this.³⁴ What this light is beyond the natural light, I leave it to them to explain. [72] For my part, I can only conjecture that they too wished to confess, though in
 20 rather obscure terms, that for the most part they are in doubt about the true meaning of Scripture. For if we look at their explanations, we find that they contain nothing beyond the natural, indeed, nothing but mere conjectures. Compare them, if you will, with the explanations of those who confess candidly that they have no light beyond the natural.
 25 You'll find them to be completely similar: human, long pondered, and laboriously devised.

[73] As for their contention that the natural light does not suffice for the interpretation of Scripture, two things show that this is false: first, as we've already demonstrated, the difficulties of interpreting Scripture have not arisen from a defect in the powers of the natural light, but only from the negligence (not to say wickedness) of the men who were
 30 indifferent to the history of Scripture while they could still construct it; and second, this supernatural light is a divine gift granted only to

34. Here Spinoza surely has in mind the Calvinist view that our knowledge of God through Scripture depends on the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* I, vi, 1–3; I, vii, 1, 2, 4, 5; and Parker 1995b, 21–27. Calvin, however, is more concerned with issues about the authority of Scripture, the establishment of the canon, and the uncorrupted transmission of its text than he is with the interpretation of particular passages.

the faithful. (Unless I'm mistaken, everyone acknowledges this second point.)³⁵ [74] But the Prophets and the Apostles were accustomed to preach, not only to the faithful, but for the most part to the impious and those lacking in faith. So those people were capable of understanding [III/113] the Prophets' and Apostles' meaning. Otherwise, it would have seemed that the Prophets and Apostles were preaching to small children and infants, not to men endowed with reason. Moreover, Moses would have prescribed laws in vain, if they could be understood only by the faithful, who require no law. So those who demand a supernatural light 5 to understand the Prophets' and Apostles' meaning obviously seem to be lacking in the natural light themselves. Far be it from me, then, to judge that such people possess a supernatural divine gift.

[75] Maimonides' opinion was quite different. He thought that each passage of Scripture admits various (indeed, contrary) meanings, and that we aren't certain of the true meaning of any passage unless 10 we know that, as we interpret it, it contains nothing which does not agree with reason, or which is contrary to it. If it's found that its literal meaning is contrary to reason—no matter how clear the literal meaning seemed to be—he thinks it should still be interpreted differently. [76] He indicates this as clearly as possible in *The Guide of the Perplexed* (II, 25), for he says:

15 דע כי אין בריחתנו מן המאמר בקדמות העולם מפני הכתובים אשר באו בתורה בהיות העולם מחודש כי אין הכתובים המורים על חדוש העולם יותר מן הכתובים המורים על היות השם גשם ולא שערי הפירוש סתומים בפנינו ולא נמנעים לנו בעניין חדוש העולם אבל היה אפשר לנו לפרשם כמו שעשינו בהרחקת הגשמות ואולי זה היה יותר קל הרבה והיינו יכולים יותר לפרש הפסוקים ההם ולהעמיד קדמות העולם כמו שפרשנו הפסוקים והרחקנו 20 היותו יתברך גשם וגו'

Know that it isn't the scriptural texts concerning the creation of the world which deter us from saying that the world has existed from eternity. For the texts which teach that the world is created are no more numerous than those which teach that God is corporeal; we are not without 25 opportunities for explaining them. We're not even hindered, but could have explained the texts concerning the creation of the world as we did when we denied that God is corporeal. Perhaps this would have been much easier to do; perhaps we could have explained them and laid a foundation for the eternity of the world more conveniently than when 30 we explained the Scriptures to get rid of the doctrine that the blessed God is corporeal. But two reasons move me not to do this, and not to believe this (i.e., that the world is eternal):

35. Cf. Calvin, *Institutes* III, i, 1; xxiv, 1; IV, xiv, 8.

[III/114] 1) because it is established by a clear demonstration that God is not corporeal, and it is necessary to explain all those passages whose literal meaning is contrary to the demonstration; for it is certain that they must then have an explanation (other than the literal explanation); but the eternity of the world is not shown by any demonstration; so it is not necessary to do violence to the Scriptures and to smooth them out³⁶ for the sake of a merely probable opinion, to whose contrary we could incline, if some reason should persuade us; and

5 2) because to believe that God is incorporeal is not contrary to the fundamentals of the Law, etc.; but to believe in the eternity of the world, in the way in which Aristotle did, destroys the foundation of the law, etc.

[77] These are Maimonides' words. From them it clearly follows [that he thought we must interpret Scripture so as to make it consistent with reason]. For if he thought it was established by reason that the world is eternal, he would not hesitate to twist Scripture and to
10 smooth it out so that in the end it would seem to teach this very thing. Indeed, he would immediately be certain that, however much Scripture everywhere expressly protested against it, nevertheless it meant to teach this eternity of the world. This means he can't be certain of the true meaning of Scripture, however clear it may be, so long as he can doubt whether the proposition it seems to assert is true, or so long as he thinks the truth of that proposition has not been established. For
15 so long as the truth of the matter is not established, we don't know whether the thing agrees with reason or is contrary to it. So [on this theory] we wouldn't know whether the literal meaning is the correct interpretation or not.

[78] If [Maimonides'] opinion were true, I would concede, absolutely, that we need some other light beyond the natural to interpret Scripture.
20 For (as we've already shown)³⁷ hardly any of the things found in these Texts can be deduced from principles known by the natural light. So the power of the natural light can't establish anything for us about their truth, and hence, can't establish anything for us about Scripture's true meaning and intention. For this we would need another light.

[79] Again, if this opinion were true, it would follow that the common
25 people, who for the most part have no knowledge of demonstrations, and don't have time for them, wouldn't be able to accept anything about Scripture except on the authority and testimonies of those who

36. Perhaps Spinoza's translation of Maimonides is tendentious here. The Pines translation at this point reads: "Consequently, in this case the texts ought not to be rejected and figuratively interpreted."

37. Above, vii, 9–10.

philosophize. They'd have to suppose that the Philosophers can't err concerning the interpretation of Scripture. This would obviously intro-
 30 duce a new authority into the Church, and a new kind of priest, or a High Priest, which the people would mock rather than venerate.

[80] It's true that our method requires knowledge of the Hebrew language, and that the common people don't have time for studying that either. Still, we're not vulnerable to an analogous objection. For the ordinary Jews and gentiles to whom the Prophets and Apostles preached long ago, and for whom they wrote, understood the language
 [III/115] the Prophets and Apostles used. This knowledge of the language enabled them to grasp the Prophets' meaning. But it didn't enable them to grasp the reasons for the things they preached. On Maimonides' view, to be able to grasp the Prophets' meaning they would also have had to know those reasons.

[81] From the nature of our method, then, it doesn't follow that
 5 the common people must trust in the testimony of interpreters. For I point out ordinary people who knew the language of the Prophets and Apostles; but Maimonides does not point to any ordinary people who understand the causes of things, from which they might grasp the Prophets' and Apostles' meaning.

[82] As for today's common people, we've already shown [§§68–69] that everything necessary for salvation can easily be grasped in any
 10 language, even though the reasons for them aren't known, because they are so ordinary and familiar. This grasp is what the common people trust, not the testimony of interpreters. As for the things [not necessary for salvation], in those matters they share the same fate as the learned.

[83] But let's return to Maimonides and examine his opinion more
 15 carefully. First, he presupposes that the Prophets agreed among themselves in everything, and that they were Philosophers and Theologians of the highest caliber. For he maintains that they drew their conclusions from the truth of the matter. But we have shown in Chapter 2 that this is false.

[84] Next, he supposes that the meaning of Scripture can't be established from Scripture itself. For the truth of things isn't established
 20 from Scripture itself (since it demonstrates nothing and doesn't teach the subjects it treats through definitions and first causes). So in Maimonides' opinion, the true meaning of Scripture can't be established from Scripture, and so, shouldn't be sought from Scripture. But we've established in this chapter that this too is false. For we've shown, both
 25 by reason and by examples, that the meaning of Scripture is established only from Scripture itself, and must be sought from Scripture itself alone, even when it speaks of things known by the natural light.

[85] Finally, he presupposes that we're permitted to explain and twist the words of Scripture according to our preconceived opinions, to deny their literal meaning (even when that meaning is most clearly perceived
 30 *or* most explicit), and to change it into any other meaning we like. Quite apart from the fact that this license is diametrically opposed to the things we've demonstrated in this Chapter (and in others), everyone sees that it's excessive and rash.

[86] But suppose we grant him this great freedom. What good will that do? None, of course. For we won't be able to investigate in this way things which can't be demonstrated. These make up the greatest
 [III/116] part of Scripture. And we won't be able to explain or interpret them according to this standard. By contrast, following our method we can explain most of these passages, and discuss them with confidence. We've already shown this, both by reason and by example. As for the
 5 things perceivable by their nature, we can easily elicit their meaning just from the context of the utterances. We've already shown this too. So Maimonides' method is utterly useless.

[87] Furthermore, his method completely takes away all the certainty the common people can have about the meaning of Scripture from a natural reading of it, and which everyone can have by following another
 10 method. So we condemn Maimonides' opinion as not only useless, but harmful and absurd.

[88] As for the Pharisees' tradition, we've already said above [§§38–39] that it's not consistent. Moreover, we've said [ibid.] that the Roman Pontiffs' authority needs a clearer testimony. I reject it for this reason alone. For if the Roman Pontiffs could establish it
 15 for us from Scripture as certainly as the Jewish High Priests previously did, I would not be at all upset by the fact that there were heretics and impious men among them. After all, there were also heretics and impious men among the High Priests of the Hebrews, men who achieved the Priesthood by perverse means, but who still had, according to the command of Scripture, the supreme 'power of
 20 interpreting the law. See Deuteronomy 17:11–12, 33:10, Malachi 2:8. [89] But since [the Popes] show us no such testimony, their authority remains highly suspect.

In case anyone should be deceived by the example of the High Priest of the Hebrews into thinking that the Universal religion also requires a Pontiff, it should be noted that because the laws of Moses
 25 were the public legislation of their Country, they required, if they were to be preserved, a certain public authority. For if each person had the freedom to interpret the public legislation according to his own will, no republic could survive. It would immediately be dissolved by this

very fact, and the public legislation would be private legislation. [90] But the nature of Religion is very different. For since it consists not so much in external actions as in simplicity and honesty of heart, it is not the domain of any public legislation or public authority. For simplicity and honesty of heart are not instilled in men by the command of laws or by public authority, and absolutely no one can be compelled by force or by laws to become blessed. For this what is required is pious and brotherly advice, good education, and above all, one's own free judgment.

[III/117] [91] Therefore, since each person has the supreme right to think freely, even about Religion, and it's inconceivable that anyone can abandon his claim to this right, each person will also have the supreme right and the supreme authority to judge freely concerning Religion, and hence to explain it and interpret it for himself. [92] For the supreme authority to interpret the laws, and the supreme judgment concerning public affairs, are lodged with the magistrates only because those are matters of public right. So for the same reason the supreme authority to explain religion, and to judge about it, will be in each person's hands, because it is a matter of each person's right.

[93] It is, therefore, far from true that we can infer the authority of the Roman Pontiff to interpret religion from the authority of the Hebrew Priests to interpret the laws of their Country. On the contrary, we can more easily infer from [the authority of the Priests] that each of us has that authority to the greatest extent possible.

[94] And we can also show from this that our method of interpreting Scripture is the best. For since each person has the utmost authority to interpret Scripture, the standard of interpretation must be nothing but the natural light common to all, not any supernatural light or external authority. [The standard of interpretation] must also be not so difficult that only the most acute Philosophers can apply it; it must be accommodated to the natural and common human mentality and capacity. We have shown that our method satisfies this condition. For we have shown that the difficulties [our method] now has have arisen from men's negligence, and not from the nature of the method.

[III/117]

CHAPTER VIII

25

*In which it is shown that the Pentateuch,
and the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel,
and Kings are not autographs.*

THEN WE ASK: WERE THERE SEVERAL WRITERS
OF ALL OF THESE BOOKS, OR ONLY ONE? AND WHO WAS HE?

[1] In the preceding Chapter we treated the foundations and principles
of our knowledge of the Scriptures, and showed that they are just a
30 genuine history of the Scriptures. Though such a history is very neces-
sary, the Ancients still neglected it. Or if they wrote any of it (or handed
it down [in an oral tradition]), that has perished by the assault of time.
So a large part of the foundations and principles of this knowledge has
[III/118] fallen into oblivion.

[2] This loss is one we might still have endured, if those who sub-
sequently transmitted the texts had stayed within the proper limits,
and in good faith transmitted to their successors the few things they
had received or found, without concocting new things out of their
own brains. The result has been that the history of Scripture has been
5 left, not only incomplete, but also quite faulty. The foundations of the
knowledge of the Scriptures are not just too slight to have allowed a
whole [history of Scripture] to be built on them; they are defective.

[3] My aim is to correct these faults and to remove the common
prejudices of Theology. But I fear my attempt may come too late.
10 Things have already nearly reached the point where men do not allow
themselves to be corrected about this, but stubbornly defend what they
have embraced under the guise of religion. Nor does any place seem to
be left for reason, except among a very few (few if compared with the
rest), so widely have these prejudices taken possession of men's minds.
15 Nevertheless, I shall try. I shall not give up putting the matter to the
test, for there is no reason to despair completely.

[4] To show these things in an orderly way, I'll begin with the prejudices
concerning the true Writers of the Sacred Books. First, concerning the writer
of the Pentateuch. Almost everyone has believed him to be Moses.¹ Indeed,

1. The view that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch seems to be based on a
misunderstanding of Deut. 31:9 (see Anchor Genesis, xix) and may be found in Philo (*On*

the Pharisees maintained this so stubbornly that they considered anyone
 20 who seemed to think otherwise a heretic. That's why Ibn Ezra, a Man with
 an independent mind and no slight learning, who was the first of all those
 I've read to take note of this prejudice, didn't dare to explain his thought
 openly, but only disclosed the problem in rather obscure terms.² I won't
 be afraid to make them clearer here, and to show the thing itself openly.
 25 [5] Here are Ibn Ezra's words, as they are found in his commentary
 on Deuteronomy:

בעבר הירדן וגו' ואם תבין סוד השנים עשר גם וכתוב משה והכנעני אז בארץ בהר יהוה
 יראה גם הנח ערשו ערש ברזל תכיר האמת

Beyond the Jordan etc. . . . provided you understand the mystery of the
 30 twelve . . . and Moses also wrote the law . . . and the Canaanite was then
 in the land . . . it will be revealed on the mountain of God . . . then also
 behold, his bed is a bed of iron . . . then you will know the truth.³

[6] With these few words he discloses, and at the same time shows,
 that it was not Moses who wrote the Pentateuch, but someone else,
 who lived long afterward, and finally that the book Moses wrote was
 another one. To show these things, I say, he notes

[III/119] first, that the preface to Deuteronomy⁴ could not have been written by
 Moses, who never crossed the Jordan.

In addition, he notes [7]

second, that the whole book of Moses was written down very clearly
 within the expanse of one altar (see Deuteronomy 27[:1–8] and Joshua
 8:31 etc.), which, according to the account of the Rabbis,⁵ consisted of

the Life of Moses I, 4, and II, 11), Josephus (*Against Apion* I, 8), Augustine (*Confessions* XII, 17), and the Talmud (see Baba Bathra 14b–15a). The Talmud makes an exception for the last eight verses of Deuteronomy, which describe the death of Moses, and ascribes those verses to Joshua. Maimonides made it a fundamental principle of Judaism that the whole Pentateuch comes to us from God through Moses, “who acted like a secretary taking dictation” (*Maimonides Reader*, 420–21). As the text indicates, Spinoza was not the first to question this tradition. But he does so more openly than Ibn Ezra and more effectively than such more recent doubters as Hobbes and Isaac de la Peyrère. For discussion see Curley 1990b and 2014, and Malcolm 2002.

2. Whether Ibn Ezra really intended to suggest doubts about the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (as Spinoza believed), or merely meant to suggest that there had been a few glosses or slight changes in the text by later editors, is still a matter of dispute. In their foreword to Ibn Ezra's commentary on the Pentateuch, Strickman and Silver claim that Spinoza “totally misrepresented” Ibn Ezra's views (V, xvii).

3. Cf. Ibn Ezra 1988, V, 3.

4. The reference is to Deut. 1:1–5, which begins: “These are the words which Moses spoke unto all Israel, beyond the Jordan, in the wilderness.”

5. The figure of twelve stones is given by Rashi (1960) in his commentary on Deut. 27:8, relying on a passage in the Talmud, Sota 35b.

- 5 only twelve stones. From this it follows that the book of Moses was much smaller in bulk than the Pentateuch.⁶

This, I think, is what the author wanted to signify by *the mystery of the twelve*.

- (Possibly he meant the twelve curses found in Deuteronomy 27[:11–26]. Perhaps he believed they hadn't been written down in the book of the law because Moses commands the Levites, in addition to writing
10 down the law, to read those curses aloud, so that they might bind the people by an oath to observing the laws which had been written down. Or perhaps he meant to indicate the last chapter of Deuteronomy, concerning the death of Moses, a chapter which consists of twelve verses. But there is no need to examine these things more carefully here, or
15 those which others may conjecture in addition.)

[8] Next he notes

third, that in Deuteronomy 31:9 it is said that ויכתוב משה את התורה *Moses wrote the law*. . . . But these can't be the words of Moses; they must be those of another Writer, relating the deeds and writings of Moses.

[9] In addition, he notes

- fourth, the passage in Genesis 12:6, where—relating that Abraham was passing through the land of the Canaanites—the Historian adds that *the Canaanite was then in that land*, by which he clearly separates the time
20 of the events described from the time when he wrote these words. So these words must have been written after the death of Moses, when the Canaanites had already been driven out and no longer occupied those regions.

In commenting on this passage Ibn Ezra also signifies the same thing with these words

- 25 והכנעני אז בארץ יתכן שארץ כנען תפשה מיד אחר ואם איננו כן יש לו סוד והמשכיל ידום

And the Canaanite was then in that land. It seems that Canaan (the grandson of Noah) seized the land of the Canaanite, which was occupied by someone else. If this is not true, there is some mystery in this matter. Let him who understands this be silent.

- That is, if Canaan invaded those regions, then the meaning will be
30 that *the Canaanite was already then in that land*, excluding the time past, when it was inhabited by another nation. But if Canaan was the first

6. In his commentary on Deut. 27:8, Ibn Ezra approved the view of Saadia Gaon, that the stones must have contained only the commandments, because they would not have been large enough to contain the entire five books of the Pentateuch. See Ibn Ezra 1988, V, 194.

to cultivate those regions (as follows from Genesis 10), then the Text sets apart the present time, i.e., that of the Writer; and so not the time of Moses, in whose time [the Canaanites] still occupied those regions. This is the mystery he says should be kept quiet.

[III/120] [10] He notes

fifth, that in Genesis 22:14 mount Moriah is called^{7**} the mountain of God, a name it didn't have until after it was dedicated to the building of the temple. But this choice of the mountain had not yet been made in the time of Moses. For Moses doesn't indicate that any place has been
5 chosen by God; on the contrary, he predicts that some day God will choose a place, on which the name of God will be bestowed.

[11] Finally, he notes

sixth, that in Deuteronomy 3 these words are inserted into the story of Og, King of Bashan: *Only Og, King of Bashan, remained of the rest of the giants;*^{8*} *behold, his bed was a bed of iron, certainly this (bed), which is in Rabbah, of the children of Ammon, nine cubits long, etc.* [Deuteronomy 3:11]

10 This insertion indicates very clearly that the Writer of these books lived long after Moses.⁹ For only someone relating events which happened long ago would speak this way, mentioning the remains of the past to induce belief. Doubtless this bed was discovered first in the time of David, who subdued this city (as 2 Samuel 12:30 relates).

15 [12] Not only here, but also a bit below, this same historian inserts in the words of Moses:

Jair, the son of Manasseh, took the whole territory of Argob, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and he called those places by his own name, Bashan, villages of Jair, unto this day. [Deuteronomy 3:14]

20 These words, I say, the Historian added to explain the words of Moses which he had just reported,

and the rest of Gilead and all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh, all the territory of Argob, under the whole of Bashan, which is called the land of the Giants.

7. **[ADN. IX] By the historian, that is, not by Abraham. For he says that the place which today is called *on the mountain of God it will be revealed* was called by Abraham *God will provide*.

8. *Note that the Hebrew word רפאים *repbaim* signifies condemned, and seems also to be a proper name in 1 Chron. 20. Therefore I think that here it signifies some family.

9. The Talmud had tried to deal with the fact that the last chapter of Deuteronomy describes the death of Moses by ascribing the last eight verses of that chapter to Joshua. The language to which Spinoza here calls attention not only excludes that hypothesis, but also, by putting the historian at a considerable distance from the events he is describing, raises doubts about his reliability.

[13] Doubtless the Hebrews in this Writer's time knew which were the villages of Jair of the tribe of Judah, but did not know them under
 25 the name of the territory of Argob, nor of the land of the Giants. So he was forced to explain which places, long ago, used to be called by these names, and at the same time to give a reason why in his time they were identified by the name of Jair, who was of the tribe of Judah, not that of Manasseh (see 1 Chronicles 2:21–22).

[14] With this we've explained Ibn Ezra's opinion, and also the
 30 passages in the Pentateuch he cites to confirm it. But he didn't note all the passages, or even the main ones. For there are many others worth noting in these books, some more important than the ones he mentioned.

[III/121] [15] First, the Writer of these books not only speaks of Moses in the third person, he also testifies to many things about him, such as:

God spoke with Moses [e.g., Numbers 1:1, 2:1, etc.];

God spoke with Moses face to face [Exodus 33:11, cf. Numbers 12:8];

Moses was the most humble of all men (Numbers 12:3);¹⁰

Moses was seized with anger against the leaders of the army (Numbers 31:14);

5 *Moses, the man of God* (Deuteronomy 33:1);

Moses, the servant of God, died [Deuteronomy 34:5];¹¹

Never was there a Prophet in Israel like Moses etc. [Deuteronomy 34:10].

[16] By contrast, when Deuteronomy records the Law Moses explained to the people, the Law he had written, Moses speaks and relates his deeds in the first person, thus: *God spoke to me* (Deuteronomy
 10 2:1, 17, etc.), *I prayed to God etc.* [Deuteronomy 9:26]. Then later, at the end of the book [32:44–34:12], after he has reported Moses's words, the historian again speaks in the third person, when he narrates how Moses gave the people, in writing, the law he had explained, how he warned them for the last time, and finally, how he ended his life. All
 15 these things—the manner of speaking, the testimonies, and the very continuity of the whole history—clearly indicate that these books were not composed by Moses himself, but by someone else.

10. Apparently this verse had long been recognized as a stumbling block for the theory that Moses wrote the entire Pentateuch himself, because that theory required the humblest of men to praise himself for his humility. Cf. HCSB at Num. 12:3, and Kugel 2007, 30–31.

11. Another traditional stumbling block for the theory of Mosaic authorship. The fact that the last chapter of Deuteronomy describes the death of Moses was presumably the reason why the Talmud assigned those verses to Joshua (Baba Bathra 14b–15a), and the reason why Luther ascribed the whole last chapter of Deuteronomy to either Joshua or Eleazar. See his *Lectures on Deuteronomy* in *Works* IX, 310.

[17] Second, note that not only does this history relate how Moses died, was buried, and caused the Hebrews to mourn for thirty days, but when it compares him to the Prophets who lived afterward, it says that he excelled them all. *Never*, [the Writer] says, *was there a Prophet in Israel like Moses, whom God knew face to face*. Obviously Moses couldn't give this testimony about himself. Neither could someone who came immediately after him. Only someone who lived many generations later would speak of the past time as this Historian does: *Never was there a Prophet etc.*, and (of the tomb), *no one knows to this day* [where Moses is buried—Deuteronomy 34:6].¹²

[18] Third, note that certain places are indicated not by the names they had while Moses was alive, but by other names they came to have much later. For example, Abraham *pursued* the enemy *as far as Dan* (see Genesis 14:14), a name that city did not have until long after the death of Joshua (see Judges 18:29).

[19] Fourth, sometimes the Histories too are extended beyond the time of Moses' life. For Exodus 16:34 relates that the children of Israel ate Manna for forty years, until they came to an inhabited land, [III/122] the border of the land of Canaan, i.e., until the time spoken of in Joshua 5:12. Another example: Genesis 36:31 says *These are the kings who reigned in Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel*. No doubt the historian is speaking there of the kings the Edomites had before David conquered them^{13**} and established governors in Edom itself. (See 2 Samuel 8:14.)¹⁴

[20] From all of this, then, it's clearer than the noon light that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but by someone who lived many

12. As Hobbes pointed out in *Leviathan* xxxiii, 4, this language is difficult to reconcile with the hypothesis some had entertained, that Moses spoke of his burial place by prophecy.

13. **[ADN. X] From this time until the reign of Jehoram, when they detached themselves from him (2 Kings 8:20), Edom did not have kings, but governors established by the Jews took the place of a king. See 1 Kings 22:48. So the governor of Edom was called a king (2 Kings 3:9). There may be some dispute whether the last of the Edomite kings began to reign before Saul was made king, or whether in this chapter of Genesis Scripture meant only to tell of the kings who died unconquered. Those people who want to list Moses among the Hebrew kings are clearly trifling. The state of the Hebrews he established (by divine agency) was completely different from a monarchic one.

14. The first person to identify this problem for the theory of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch—the fact that Gen. 36:31–39 lists kings who reigned in Edom long after the death of Moses—seems to have been an eleventh-century Jewish court physician in Spain, Isaac ibn Yashush. On this see Friedman 1989, 18–19, who notes the irony that Ibn Ezra (whose cryptic remarks may have prompted Spinoza's doubts about the Mosaic authorship) sharply criticized Isaac for his theory that this chapter was composed in the reign of King Jehoshaphat, and said that Isaac's book deserved to be burned. See Ibn Ezra 1988, I, 341, which makes the suggestion Spinoza dismisses in ADN. X, that Moses can be counted as a king of Israel. Spinoza will return to this passage in ix, 6.

generations after Moses. But please, let's attend also to the books Moses
 10 did write, which are mentioned in the Pentateuch. From these refer-
 ences it will be evident that they were different from the Pentateuch.

[21] First, then, it's evident from Exodus 17:14 that by God's com-
 mand Moses wrote an account of the war against Amalek. That chapter
 doesn't establish what book he wrote this in, but Numbers 21:14 men-
 tions a book called *of the wars of God*. No doubt this book related the
 15 war against Amalek—and also all the encampments which the author
 of the Pentateuch testifies that Moses described (Numbers 33:2).

[22] Moreover, Exodus 24:4–7 establishes the existence of another
 book, called ספר הברית *book of the covenant*,^{15*} which he read before
 20 the Israelites when they first entered into a covenant with God. But
 this book (*or* this letter) contained only a few things, viz. the laws *or*
 commands of God related from Exodus 20:22 through 23:33. Anyone
 who has read that chapter impartially and with sound judgment will
 acknowledge this. [23] For it's related there that as soon as Moses
 25 understood the people's intention to enter into a covenant with God,
 he immediately wrote down God's pronouncements and laws. Then in
 the morning light, after he had performed certain ceremonies, he read
 out to the whole assembly the conditions of entering into the covenant.
 Once these conditions had been read out, and without doubt grasped
 by all the ordinary people, they bound themselves with full consent. So
 30 both the shortness of the time it took to write it down, and the nature
 of the covenant the people were making, show that this book contained
 nothing beyond the few things I have just mentioned.

[24] Finally, it's evident that in the fortieth year after the departure
 from Egypt Moses explained all the laws he had promulgated (see
 Deuteronomy 1:5), and bound the people to them again (see Deuter-
 onomy 29:14), and finally wrote a book which contained the laws he
 had explained, and this new covenant (see Deuteronomy 31:9). After-
 ward Joshua added to this book, called *the book of the law of God*, an
 account of the covenant by which the people bound itself once again,
 5 in his time. This was the third covenant it entered into with God (see
 Joshua 24:25–26).

[25] But since we have no book which contains this covenant of Moses
 together with the covenant of Joshua, we must concede that this book
 has perished—unless we want to be as crazy as the Chaldean Paraphrast
 Jonathan,¹⁶ and twist the words of Scripture to our liking. For in the

15. *NB: In Hebrew ספר *sepher* more often signifies letter *or* scroll. [This explains the
 parenthetical remark in the next sentence of the text.]

16. Spinoza refers to a work now known as the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, an Ara-
 maic translation (or paraphrase) of the Pentateuch, traditionally (but it seems wrongly)

10 face of this difficulty, he preferred to corrupt Scripture rather than confess his own ignorance. [26] These words from the book of Joshua

¹⁷ ויכתב יהושע את הדברים האלה בספר תורת האלהים *and Joshua wrote these words in the book of the Law of God* (Joshua 24:26)

he translates into Chaldean as follows

15 ויכתב יהושע ית פתגמיה האילן ואצנעיונן בספר אורייתא דיהוה *and Joshua wrote these words and kept them with the book of the Law of God.*

[27] What can you do with people who see nothing but what they want to? What, I ask, is this, but to deny Scripture and to forge a new Scripture out of one's own brain?

We conclude, therefore, that the book of the law of God which Moses wrote was not the Pentateuch, but an altogether different book, which the author of the Pentateuch inserted into his own work in an
20 orderly way. What we've just said shows this with utmost clarity. So does what is now to be said.

[28] When it's related, in the passage of Deuteronomy just mentioned [31:9], that Moses wrote the book of the law, the historian adds that Moses handed it over to the priests, and that he commanded them to read it out to the whole people at a fixed time [every seventh year]. That
25 shows that this book was much shorter than the Pentateuch, since it could be read out in this way in one assembly, so that everyone would understand it. [29] We must also not fail to mention here that, of all the books Moses wrote, he commanded them to scrupulously preserve and keep this one of the second covenant and the Song (which he also
30 wrote afterward, so that the whole people would learn it thoroughly).¹⁸ For by the first covenant he had bound only those who were present, but by the second he bound everyone, even their posterity (see Deuteronomy 29:14–15). So he commanded the book of this second covenant to be preserved scrupulously by future generations—along (as we have said) with the Song, which concerns future generations most especially.

[30] Therefore, since it's not established that Moses wrote other
[III/124] books besides these, since he didn't command posterity to scrupulously

ascribed to Jonathan ben Uzziel, a pupil of Hillel (who had in fact produced an Aramaic paraphrase of the prophets). The Buxtorf Bible, which Spinoza owned, reproduced these paraphrases, along with selections from the most prominent medieval commentaries. The Targums played an important role in medieval Jewish liturgy and biblical studies. For more, see ABD VI, 320–21.

17. So Spinoza's text reads. For the final word the Masoretic text reads אלהים.

18. Earlier references to a song ascribed to Moses (at III/39, 90) clearly referred to the song in Exod. 15. But here Spinoza seems to have in mind the song in Deut. 32:1–43.

preserve any other book besides the little Book of the law and the Song, and finally, since many things occur in the Pentateuch which Moses could not have written, it follows that no one has any basis for saying that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. To claim this is
5 completely contrary to reason.

[31] But here, perhaps, someone will ask whether Moses didn't also write, besides [the laws of the second covenant and the Song], the laws when they were first revealed to him? In the course of forty years, didn't he write down any of the laws he promulgated, apart from those few which I said [viii, 22] were contained in the book of the first covenant?

10 [32] I reply: though I grant that it seems reasonable for Moses to have written down the laws at the very time and place in which he happened to communicate them, I nevertheless deny that we are entitled to affirm this [simply because it would have been reasonable for him to do so]. For we've shown above that we must maintain nothing
15 about such matters except what is established from Scripture itself, or which is elicited solely from its foundations by a legitimate principle of inference. We mustn't maintain things of this kind simply because they seem to be consistent with reason.

[33] In any case, reason itself does not compel us to maintain this. For perhaps the assembly of elders communicated Moses' edicts to the people in writing, and afterward the historian collected them and inserted them in an orderly way in the story of Moses' life.

20 This will be enough about the five books of Moses. [34] Now it's time for us to examine the remaining books. By similar reasoning the book of Joshua is also shown not to be an autograph.¹⁹ For it is another person who testifies that Joshua was famous throughout the whole land (see Joshua 6:27), that he omitted none of the things Moses had commanded (see Joshua 8:35, 11:15), that he grew old and called
25 everyone into an assembly [Joshua 23:1–2], and that after some time he breathed his last [Joshua 24:29].

[35] Secondly, the book of Joshua too relates certain things which happened after Joshua's death: e.g., that after his death the Israelites worshipped God as long as the elders who had known him lived [24:31].

19. By denying that these books are autographs Spinoza means, not just that our oldest manuscripts are not actually written in the hand of the people to whom tradition assigned authorship, but that they are not even transcripts of any document substantially written by the authors to whom tradition assigned them. The same Talmudic tradition which made Moses the author of (most of) the Pentateuch assigned authorship of the book of Joshua to Joshua, and similarly for the other books Spinoza discusses in this chapter (Baba Bathra 14b–15a).

And 16:10 relates that Ephraim and Manasseh *did not drive out the Canaanite who was living in Gezer, but, he adds, the Canaanite dwelled in the midst of Ephraim unto this day and was a slave*. [36] The very same thing is related in the book of Judges (1[:29–30]). And the manner of speaking—*unto this day*—also shows that the Writer is relating things which happened long ago. Similar to this are [Joshua] 15:63, concerning the children of Judah, and the story of Caleb in 15:13. [37] Also the case [III/125] related in 22:10[–33], concerning the two and a half tribes who built an altar beyond the Jordan, seems to have happened after the death of Joshua. In that whole story no mention is made of Joshua, but the people alone considers whether to make war, sends out envoys, waits for their reply, and in the end approves it.

5 [38] Finally, it follows clearly from Joshua 10:14 that this book was written many generations after Joshua. For [the author] testifies that *there was no other day like that day, either before or afterward, on which God (thus) obeyed anyone etc.* Therefore, if Joshua ever wrote any book, it was surely the one mentioned in this same story.²⁰

10 [39] I believe no one of sound mind persuades himself that the book of Judges was written by the Judges themselves.²¹ For the summation of the whole story in 2[:6–23] shows clearly that the entire book was written by a single historian. Next, because the Writer of this book frequently reminds us that in those times there was no King in Israel, 15 it was doubtless written after kings had achieved rule.²²

[40] There's no reason why we should linger long over the books of Samuel, since the story is extended far past his life.²³ Still, I should like to note just this: that this book too was written many generations after Samuel. For in 1 Samuel 9:9 the Historian reminds us in 20 a parenthesis that *long ago in Israel, when someone went to consult God, he said "Come, let us go to the seer," for long ago one who is today called a prophet was called a seer*.

[41] Finally, the books of Kings themselves establish that they are gathered from the books of the acts of Solomon (see 1 Kings 11:41),

20. Josh. 10:13 says that the story of Joshua's commanding the sun to stand still is written in the Book of Jashar, a book which has not survived in the Bible as it has come down to us.

21. Indeed, Talmudic tradition assigned authorship of Judges to Samuel (Baba Bathra 14b–15a).

22. At this point the title of this chapter would lead us to expect a discussion of the book of Ruth. But Spinoza does not discuss its authorship or date, though he will argue later (in §44) that its opening links it with Judges. In Christian Bibles Ruth normally does come immediately after Judges. In the Hebrew Bible it is grouped with the Writings, immediately after the Song of Songs.

23. Nevertheless, Baba Bathra 14b–15a does make Samuel the author of the books bearing his name. Samuel's death is reported in 1 Sam. 25:1.

the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (see 1 Kings 14:29), and the
 25 Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (see 1 Kings 14:19).²⁴

[42] We conclude, therefore, that all the books enumerated so far are apographs,²⁵ and relate the things contained in them as having happened long ago.

If now we attend to the connection and theme of all these books, we shall easily infer that they were all written by one and the same
 25 Historian, who wanted to write about the past history of the Jews from their first origin up to the first destruction of the City.²⁶ [43] Just from the way these books are connected with one another, we can see that they contain only one narrative of one historian. As soon as he has stopped narrating the life of Moses, he passes to the history of Joshua:

and it came to pass, after Moses, the servant of God, died, that God said to Joshua etc. [Joshua 1:1]

[III/126] And when he has finished this story with the death of Joshua, he begins the history of the Judges with the same transition and linkage:

And it came to pass, after Joshua died, that the children of Israel inquired of God etc. [Judges 1:1]

[44] And to this book, as an appendix, he attaches the book of Ruth:

5 *And it came to pass, in the days when the Judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. [Ruth 1:1]*

To this, in the same way, he also attaches the first book of Samuel. When this is finished, he proceeds by his customary transition to the second book. And to this, since the story of David was not yet finished, he joins the first book of Kings, and continuing to relate the history of David, in the end he attaches the second book to it with the same linkage.

24. Baba Bathra 14b–15a makes Jeremiah the author of the books of Kings. Spinoza's theory that the books of Kings derived from the lost works it mentions seems now to be generally accepted. Cf. HCSB 474 and ABD IV, 70–71.

25. That is, these books are not autographs in the sense defined in the note to viii, 34.

26. Spinoza refers here to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E. In his theory that the primary historical books of the Hebrew Bible—beginning with Genesis and ending with 2 Kings—were in the end the work of one final editor, an historian working in the postexilic period, who wrote a history of his people to demonstrate that the calamities which had befallen them were the result of their disobedience to God's law, Spinoza's picture resembles that offered by David Noel Freedman in Freedman 1994. (Spinoza counts twelve books in this series when he sums up in viii, 57–58, because he counts Ruth as part of the series, and divides Samuel and Kings into two books each. Freedman counts nine books because he does not divide Samuel and Kings and omits Ruth.)

10 [45] Next, the continuity and order of the histories also indicates that there was only one Historian, who set himself a definite goal. For he begins by narrating the first origin of the Hebrew nation, and proceeds by telling in an orderly manner on what occasion and at what times Moses promulgated laws and predicted many things to [the people]. Then he relates how, in accordance with Moses' predictions, they invaded the
15 promised land (see Deuteronomy 7), but how, once they had occupied it, they abandoned the laws (Deuteronomy 31:16), and how, as a result, many evils came upon them (Deuteronomy 31:17). Next, the Historian tells how they decided to elect Kings (Deuteronomy 17:14), and relates that things went prosperously for them when the kings heeded the laws, but unhappily when they did not (Deuteronomy 28:36, 68). Finally he
20 relates the downfall of the state, as Moses had predicted it.

[46] But as for things which contribute nothing to strengthening the authority of the law, either he passes over them in complete silence or else he refers the reader to other Historians. Therefore, all these books agree in having one purpose, viz. to teach the statements and edicts of Moses, and to demonstrate them through the outcomes of things.

25 [47] These three things taken together—the simplicity of the theme of all these books, the way they are connected, and the fact that they were apographs, written many generations after the events related—lead us to infer that, as we have just said, they were all written by just one
30 Historian. [48] Who he was, I cannot show so clearly; but I suspect that he was Ezra.²⁷ The considerations which combine to prompt this conjecture are not trivial.

[First,] since the Historian (whom we now know to have been only one person) produces a history up to Jehoiachin's release [2 Kings 25:27] and adds, as well, that [25:29–30] Jehoiachin dined at the King's table his whole life (i.e., either Jehoiachin's life or that of Nebuchadnezzar's son—the meaning is quite doubtful), it follows that he was not anyone
[III/127] before Ezra. [49] But except for Ezra Scripture doesn't mention anyone who flourished then, who zealously tried to discover God's law and honored it (see Ezra 7:10), and who was a Writer skilled in the Law
5 of Moses (see 7:6). So I cannot suspect anyone but Ezra of having written these books.²⁸

27. In *Leviathan* xxxiii, 19, Hobbes had reached a similar conclusion, on the basis of two passages in the apocryphal 2 Esdras. Hobbes' argument does not rely on the premise that, because of their unity of theme, the historical books were the work of one author. Indeed, Hobbes does not limit his conclusion to the historical books. For a thorough discussion of the ancestry of the Ezra hypothesis, see Malcolm 2002. See also Curley 1994 and 2014.

28. Spinoza mistakenly thinks that Ezra was among the first wave of those who returned to Jerusalem at the end of the Babylonian captivity. See below, annotation at x, 1. For

[50] Second, we see in this testimony concerning Ezra that he used zeal not only in trying to discover God's law, but also in enhancing it. Moreover, Nehemiah 8:8 also says *that they read the book of God's law explained, and they used their intellect, and they understood the Scripture.*²⁹

10 [51] But since the book of Deuteronomy contains not only the book of the law of Moses (or the greatest part of it), but also many things inserted for a fuller explanation, I conjecture from this that the book of Deuteronomy is the book of God's law which they then read—written, enhanced, and explained by Ezra.

[52] When we explained Ibn Ezra's opinion, we gave two examples
15 illustrating that many things are inserted parenthetically in the book of Deuteronomy, to explain it more fully. But there are many other examples of this feature in that work. E.g., in Deuteronomy 2:12, *and previously the Horites lived in Seir; but the sons of Esau drove them out and*
20 *destroyed them from their sight and dwelled in their place, as Israel did in the land of their inheritance, which God gave them.* This explains 2:3–4, viz. that the sons of Esau, who received mount Seir as an inheritance, were not the first to occupy that land, but that they invaded it and dislodged and destroyed the Horites, who dwelt there previously, as the
25 Israelites did to the Canaanites after the death of Moses.

[53] Again, verses 6–9 in Deuteronomy 10 are inserted parenthetically in the words of Moses. For no one fails to see that verse 8, which begins *at that time God set apart the tribe of Levi*, must be related to verse 5, not to the death of Aaron, which Ezra seems to have inserted
30 here for no other reason than because, in this account of the calf the people had worshipped, Moses had said that he had prayed to God for Aaron (see Deuteronomy 9:20). Next, he explains that, at the time Moses is speaking of here, God chose the tribe of Levi for himself, so that he might show the reason for the choice, and why the Levites were not called to a share of the possession. This done, he goes on to follow the thread of the history in the words of Moses.

[III/128] [54] To these examples we should add the preface of the book [Deuteronomy 1:1–5] and all those passages which speak of Moses in the

a summary of the debate over Ezra's work and importance, see ABD II, 726–28, which concludes that there was an historical Ezra, who did some of the things later tradition ascribed to him, but about whom hagiographic legends accumulated.

Some do credit him with editing the Pentateuch in its present form. For argument to this effect, see Friedman 1989, ch. 13. Friedman would not assign the historical sequence from Joshua to 2 Kings to Ezra, arguing instead that the final version of those books is the work of Jeremiah (ch. 7).

29. The text (incorrectly) has Neh. 8:9. I take it that when Spinoza says that Ezra 'enhanced' [*adornandam*] God's law, he means that he offered an interpretation of the law which made it more understandable.

third person. Beyond these, he has added, or expressed in other words, many other things which we cannot now recognize as distinct—doubtless so that the men of his own time would grasp them more easily.

5 [55] If we had the book of the law of Moses itself, I say, I don't doubt that we would find a great discrepancy, both in the words and in the order of the precepts and the reasons for them. For when I compare just the Decalogue of this book with the Decalogue of Exodus (where its history is explicitly related), I see that it is inconsistent with the latter in all these respects:³⁰

10 [i] the fourth commandment [Deuteronomy 5:12–15, Exodus 20:8–11] is not only stated in a different way, it is much longer;

[ii] the reason given for it differs entirely from the reason offered in Exodus; and finally,

[iii] the order in which the tenth precept is explained here [Deuteronomy 5:21] is also different from that in Exodus [20:17].

[56] I think Ezra did these things, both here and in other places, as I've said, because he was explaining the law of God to the men of his
15 time. That's why he set out and explained this Book of God's Law. And I think this book was the first of all those which I've said he wrote. I conjecture this because it contains the Laws of his Country, which the people most needed, and also because it's not attached to the preceding book by any linkage, as all the others are, but begins with the detached
20 statement, *These are the words of Moses, etc.*

[57] But after he finished this, and after he had imparted a thorough knowledge of the law to the people, I believe he then applied his zeal to writing down a complete history of the Hebrew nation, from the origin of the world to the final destruction of the City. In this history he inserted the Book of Deuteronomy in its place. And perhaps he
25 called its first five books the books of Moses because it's mainly his life which is contained in them, and he took the name from the more important part. [58] For the same reason he also called the sixth book by the name of Joshua, the seventh, Judges, the eighth, Ruth, the ninth and perhaps also the tenth, Samuel, and finally the eleventh and twelfth, Kings. But whether Ezra put the finishing touches on this work, and
30 brought it to completion in the way he wanted to—that's a topic for the following Chapter.

30. Cf. above, i, 13.

CHAPTER IX

*Other questions concerning the same Books,
e.g., whether Ezra put them in final form,
and whether the marginal notes
found in the Hebrew manuscripts
were variant readings*

5 [1] Just from the passages we've cited to confirm our opinion about the true Writer of these books—passages which without our perspective would have to seem very obscure to anyone—it's easy to infer how much the preceding investigation of this issue aids the perfect understanding of the books. But besides the Writer, there remain other things to be
10 noted in the books themselves, which the common superstition doesn't permit the common people to recognize.

[2] The most important of these is that Ezra—whom I shall take to be the Writer of the books discussed, until someone establishes another writer with greater certainty—did not put the narratives contained in these books in final form, and did not do anything but collect the nar-
15 ratives from different writers, sometimes just copying them, and that he left them to posterity without having examined or ordered them.¹

[3] I can't conjecture what causes prevented him from carrying out this work in every detail, unless perhaps it was an untimely death.

But though we've been deprived of the ancient Hebrew historians,
20 the few fragments we do have establish with utmost clarity [that Ezra did collect different histories in this way]. [4] For the story of Hezekiah (from 2 Kings 18:17) is copied from Isaiah's account, as it was found written in the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.² Indeed, in the book of Isaiah we read this whole story, which was contained in the

1. Dunin-Borkowski 1933–36, III, 325–26, argued that there is a contradiction between this claim and the preceding chapter's claim that Ezra wrote the historical books under consideration. ALM argue that there is no contradiction, that Ch. viii contends only that Ezra undertook to write a history of Israel—making extensive use of preexisting materials—and that ix, 2, contends only that his execution of this plan was very imperfect.

2. Though the question is evidently still open to debate, the current view seems to be that 2 Kings 18:13–20:19 was the source for the account of Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in Isaiah 36–39, rather than Isaiah being the source for 2 Kings. See Anchor Isaiah, I, 459. At 2 Kings 18:13 HCSB comments that “The narrative includes much traditional material and shows signs of having gone through a long editorial history.”

25 Chronicles of the Kings of Judah³ (see 2 Chronicles 32:32), related in the same words as here, with only a very few exceptions.^{4**} From these exceptions the only conclusion we can draw is that various readings of Isaiah's narrative were found—unless someone prefers to dream of mysteries in these things also.

[5] Again, the last chapter of this book [2 Kings] is also contained in the last chapter of Jeremiah and in chapters 39 and 40 of that work.⁵

In addition, we find 2 Samuel 7 copied in 1 Chronicles 17.⁶ But we discover that the words in the different passages are so remarkably changed^{7**} that we may easily recognize that these two chapters were

[III/130] taken from two different copies of the story of Nathan.

[6] Finally, the Genealogy of the Kings of Edom, treated in Genesis 36:31[–39], is also described in the same words in 1 Chronicles 1[:43–51], though it is manifest, nevertheless, that the author of this book has taken the things he narrates from other Historians, but not

5 from the twelve books we've attributed to Ezra.⁸

[7] There is no doubt that if we had these Historians, this conclusion would be established directly. But because, as I've said, we have been deprived of them, the only thing remaining for us is to examine the histories [which have survived]: their order and connection, the variations

10 in their repetitions, and finally, the discrepancy in the computation of years. In this way we can judge of the others.

3. One of the historical sources for our present Bible which it refers to, but does not include.

4. **[ADN. XI] E.g., in 2 Kings 18:20 we read in the second person אמרת, *you have said, but these are only words, etc.*, whereas in Isaiah 36:5 we read אמרתי, *I have said, surely these are words, that in war there is a need for counsel and strength*. Again, in 2 Kings 18:22 we read וכי תאמר, *but perhaps you will say*, in the plural; but in Isaiah's copy [36:7] this is in the singular. Moreover, in the text of Isaiah we do not read these words (from 2 Kings 18:32) ארץ זית יצהר ודבש וחיו ולא תמותו ואל-תשמעו אל-חזקיהו [*a land of olive oil and honey, so that you may live and not die. Don't listen to Hezekiah*]. In this way there are many other variant readings. No one will be able to determine which should be chosen in preference to the others.

5. On the relationship between 2 Kings and Jeremiah, see Anchor Kings, II, 320–21.

6. On the relationship between 2 Sam. 7 and 1 Chron. 17, see Anchor Chronicles, II, 662–64.

7. **[ADN. XII] E.g., in 2 Samuel 7:6 we read במשכן ובאהל, *and I have continually wandered with a tent and a tabernacle*, whereas in 1 Chronicles 17:5 we read במשכן ובאהל, *and I went from tent to tent and from tabernacle*, with מתהלך changed into משהלך, into משהלך. Again, 2 Samuel 7:10 reads ונחית, *to afflict him*, and 1 Chronicles 17:9 reads ובלתו, *to waste him*. And in this way everyone who is neither completely blind nor altogether mad, and who has once read these chapters, will notice many discrepancies, and others of greater importance.

8. The information about the kings of Edom in Genesis is almost identical to that in 1 Chronicles, except that the last verse of this section in Chronicles reports the death of Hadad. HCSB comments that “this addition makes the chiefs [whose names immediately follow] clearly subsequent to the list of Edomite kings.”

[8] Let us, then, carefully assess at least the principal narratives, taking first that of Judah and Tamar, which the Historian begins to relate in Genesis 38: *And it happened at that time that Judah departed from his brothers* [38:1]. This time must be related to another^{9**} which he has just
 15 spoken of. But it can't be related to the time just discussed in Genesis.¹⁰ For we can't count more than twenty-two years from the time Joseph was taken to Egypt to the time the Patriarch Jacob also went there with his whole family. [9] When Joseph was sold by his brothers, he was seventeen
 20 [Gen. 37:2]; he was thirty when Pharaoh ordered him to be released from prison [41:46]. If we add to these [thirteen years] the seven years of fertility [41:47] and two years of famine [45:6], that makes twenty-two years.¹¹

[10] But no one can conceive that so many things could have happened in this length of time: viz. that Judah had three sons, one after another,
 25 by the one wife he had then married; that the eldest of these, when his age permitted, married Tamar; that after the first son had died, the second took Tamar as his wife; that the second son also died; and that some time after all these things happened, Judah himself unknowingly

9. **[ADN. XIII] That this text concerns only the time when Joseph was sold is not established only from the context of the statement. It may also be inferred from Judah's age. At that time he was twenty-two at most, if we may make a calculation from the preceding narrative about him. For it is evident from Genesis 29:35 that Judah was born in the tenth year after the Patriarch Jacob began to serve Laban; but Joseph was born in the fourteenth year. [For this claim concerning the year of Joseph's birth, see the note to §12.] Since Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold, Judah at that time was no more than twenty-one. So those who believe that Judah's long absence from home happened before Joseph was sold are deluding themselves, and are more anxious about the divinity of Scripture than certain of it.

10. Gen. 37 had concluded by reporting the sale of Joseph to the Egyptians. Gen. 38 interrupts the narrative about Joseph with the story of Judah and Tamar, which Spinoza summarizes in §10. The problem is that the events recounted in Gen. 38 are supposed to have begun when Joseph was sold into bondage in Egypt and that twenty-two years later, when Judah moved to Egypt, he was accompanied not only by the children he had by Tamar, but also by the two grandchildren he had through one of her sons (as we learn in Gen. 46:12).

Worries about the chronology of Gen. 38 go back to *Seder Olam*, a biblical commentary from the second century C.E. *Seder Olam* is able to squeeze all these events into the twenty-two years which it supposes to have passed between the sale of Joseph and Judah's move to Egypt by assuming that Judah's sons by Shua's daughter and Tamar all married at the age of seven. See *Seder Olam* 2005, 32–34.

In his commentary on Gen. 38:1 Ibn Ezra rejected this solution, arguing that procreation starts at twelve at the earliest. His solution is that the phrase "at that time" does not (as we might have expected) refer to the time mentioned in the immediately preceding verse—the time when Joseph was sold—but to an earlier time. He does not say when that time was, and it is hard to see when it could have been, consistently with Judah's participation in the sale of Joseph in Gen. 37. See Ibn Ezra 1988, I, 354–55. Spinoza therefore proposes an alternative theory of the text.

11. This is the traditional calculation, as given in *Seder Olam* 2005, 30–31 (and assumed by Ibn Ezra in his commentary on Gen. 38).

had relations with his own daughter-in-law, Tamar, by whom he begot two more sons (though in one birth); and that one of these sons also
 30 became a father—all within the time previously mentioned.

[11] Since not all these events can be related to the time in question in Genesis, they must be related to another time, treated just previously in another book. Ezra, then, has merely copied this story, and inserted it among the others, without having examined it.

[12] But it must be confessed that, not only this chapter, but the
 [III/131] whole story of Joseph and Jacob is so full of inconsistencies that it must have been culled from different historians and copied out.¹² For Genesis 47 relates that when Joseph first brought Jacob to greet Pharaoh, Jacob was 130 years old. If we subtract from that the twenty-two years he
 5 spent in grief because of Joseph's absence, as well as the seventeen years of Joseph's age when he was sold, and finally the seven years he served because of Rachel, it will be found that he was very, very old—eighty-four in fact—when he married Leah. On the other hand, Dinah was
 10 hardly seven,^{13**} when Shechem raped her, and Simeon and Levi were hardly twelve and eleven when they pillaged that whole city and put all its citizens to the sword.¹⁴

12. A clearer example than the one Spinoza gives, perhaps, is that twice Jacob is told that he will no longer be called Jacob, but will henceforth be known as Israel. (See Gen. 32:28 and 35:10.) But he continues to be called Jacob after that, though not consistently. Sometimes he is called Israel. (E.g., in Gen. 35:20, 35:22b, and 37:1–2 he is called Jacob. In Gen. 35:21–22a, 37:3, and 37:13, he is called Israel.) This was a classic problem, addressed by Manasseh ben Israel in his *Conciliator*, 1842/1972, I, 82–84. For other inconsistencies in the Joseph-Jacob stories, see Anchor Genesis, xxxiii.

13. **[ADN. XIV] For what some people think—viz. that Jacob traveled between Mesopotamia and Bethel for eight or ten years—smacks of foolishness. I might have said this, with all due respect to Ibn Ezra. For Jacob hurried as much as he could, not only because of the desire to see his parents which no doubt possessed him, but also to fulfill the vow he had made (see Gen. 28:20 and 31:13).

But if these seem to be conjectures rather than reasons, let's grant that, by a fate worse than that which befell Ulysses, Jacob spent eight or ten additional years on this short journey—or more, if you like. Certainly they will not be able to deny that Benjamin was born in the last year of this travel [35:16–18], i.e., according to their hypothesis, in about the fifteenth or sixteenth year after Joseph was born. For Jacob said good-bye to Laban in the seventh year after the birth of Joseph. But from Joseph's seventeenth year to the year in which the patriarch himself went to Egypt, there were not more than twenty-two years, as we have shown in this chapter [§9]. And so Benjamin was twenty-three or twenty-four at most when he went to Egypt. But though he was thus in the flower of his youth, it is established that he had grandchildren (see Genesis 46:21, and compare it with Numbers 26:38–40 and 1 Chronicles 8:1ff.). This, of course, is no less unreasonable than to maintain that Dinah was raped at the age of seven, and the other things we have deduced from the order of this history. So it is plain that when inexperienced men try to solve these difficulties, they fall into others, and complicate and mangle the situation more.

14. The point in this paragraph seems to be, not so much that the narrative contains inconsistencies in the strict sense, as that it contains serious improbabilities. A very old man

[13] There's no need for me to review everything in the Pentateuch here. If you just attend to this—that all the precepts and stories in these five books are related indiscriminately, without order, with no
 15 account taken of the times, and that one and the same story is often repeated, sometimes in a different way¹⁵—you will easily see that all these things have been collected and piled up indiscriminately, so that afterward they might be more easily examined and reduced to order.

[14] This is true not only of the narratives in the Pentateuch, but
 20 also of the other narratives in the remaining seven books, down to the destruction of the city. They were collected in the same way. Who does not see that in Judges 2, from v. 6, a new Historian is brought in (who had also written of the things Joshua did), and that his words are simply

acts with the passion we might more naturally expect of a very young man; preadolescent boys talk and act in a way we might find more credible in adults; and a very young girl is the victim of a sexual assault. Perhaps not all of these things are quite as improbable as Spinoza thinks, but taken collectively they seem a lot to swallow.

Spinoza's estimate of Jacob's age at the time of his marriage to Leah is based on the following calculations. First, he assumes, on the basis of the data presented in §9 of the text, that Jacob grieved twenty-two years because of Joseph's absence. Given that Jacob was 130 when Joseph presented him to the Pharaoh (47:9), if we subtract the twenty-two years of grief, plus the seventeen years of Joseph's age when sold into slavery, and the seven years Jacob served Laban between his marriage to Leah and the birth of Joseph, we get eighty-four. *Genesis Rabbah* (II, 618) had already reached this result by a different route.

We must not suppose, as some do, that Jacob had to wait seven years between his marriage to Leah and his marriage to Rachel. Gen. 29:26–30 says he waited only a week. He was permitted to marry Rachel *before* he served his second seven years of service. But Rachel was barren for several years before she had Joseph. The traditional assumption was that the twelve children born to Jacob in Paddan-Aram were all born during the second seven-year period. See Ibn Ezra 1988, I, 288 (and *Seder Olam* 2005, 23). Spinoza is content to make the traditional assumption. As Ibn Ezra had pointed out, counting the two handmaidens, there were four women involved, some of whom may have been pregnant concurrently. To account for the birth of twelve children in seven years, it is not necessary to assume that all the children were born prematurely.

Spinoza's estimate of the ages of Dinah, Simeon, and Levi at the time of the rape is the estimate Ibn Ezra makes of their ages when they arrived in Shechem. See his commentary on Gen. 33:20 (1988, I, 326). But Ibn Ezra assumes that Jacob and his family stayed in Shechem for many years before proceeding on to Bethel. He does not say why, but presumably thought this assumption was necessary to explain the events of Gen. 34. ADN. XIV is designed to block this move.

15. The recognition that the scriptural text often contains alternate versions of the same story—as, for example, the two separate versions of the creation story in Gen. 1–2:4a and Gen. 2:4b–3:24, or the two blended versions of the flood story in Gen. 6:5–8:22—was an important step in the development of the Documentary Hypothesis. On this see Friedman 1989, ch. 2, or Coogan 2006, chs. 1 and 2. Spinoza is keenly aware of the existence of these “doublets” and the inconsistencies between them. He would have found the inconsistencies between the various accounts of the creation and the flood, for example, discussed in Manasseh's *Conciliator*, questions 3, 5, 9, 12, 28, 29, and 31. The Joseph-Jacob stories are another example where two different stories have been blended. Cf. Anchor Genesis, xxxiii.

copied out?¹⁶ For after our Historian related (in Joshua 24) that Joshua
 25 died and was buried, and after he promised at the beginning of this
 book [Judges] to relate what happened after Joshua's death, how, if he
 wanted to follow the thread of his story, could he have connected what
 he begins to relate here, about Joshua, with what he has just said?^{17**}

[15] Similarly, chapters 17, 18, etc., of 1 Samuel are selected from
 another Historian, who thought there was another reason why David
 30 began to attend Saul's court, a reason very different from the one related
 in 1 Samuel 16. He didn't think David went to Saul because Saul had
 called him, on the advice of his servants (as related in 16[:17–19]), but
 thought that, his father having sent him by chance to his brothers in
 Saul's camp, he became known to Saul only on the occasion of the vic-
 tory he had against the Philistine, Goliath. Only then was he kept in
 [III/132] the court [17:55–18:2]. I suspect the same thing of 1 Samuel 26 —that
 the historian seems to relate there the same story treated in ch. 24,
 according to the opinion of someone else.¹⁸

[16] But I pass over all this, and proceed to examine the chronology.
 5 In 1 Kings 6[:1] it is said that Solomon built the temple 480 years after
 the departure from Egypt.¹⁹ But from the individual narratives we infer
 a much greater number. [17] For

Moses governed the people in the wilderness for . . .	40 years ²⁰
In the opinion of Josephus and others, we attribute to Joshua	
10 (who lived 110 years) a reign of not more than . . .	26 years ²¹

16. The discontinuities and repetitions which occur in the passages connecting Joshua to Judges (from Josh. 24:29 through Judg. 2:10) have led the most recent twentieth-century editor to propose that the central portions of Judges (2:6–15:20) are an eighth-century editor's collection of old stories, which later editors have embedded in a Deuteronomistic or Deuteronomistic framework. See Anchor Judges, 29–38, and its comments on Judges 1–2.

17. **[ADN. XV] That is, in other terms and in another order than are found in the book of Joshua. [This adnotation occurs only in two of our sources, Saint-Glain and KB. Its authenticity is doubtful.]

18. On the relation between these two versions of a story in which David spares Saul's life, see Anchor Samuel, I, 385–87, 409–10.

19. By the time of Manasseh ben Israel's *Conciliator* there had been a long history of attempts to reconcile the numbers. Cf. his comment on Judges 11:26 (1842/1972, II, 29–34). Though Spinoza never explicitly mentions Manasseh, it seems clear that Proietti 1997 is right to argue that he has him in mind in this passage. Manasseh's way of setting up the problem is very close to the one Spinoza uses in §17. He then canvasses several possible solutions before proposing his own, which makes what sometimes seem to be rather arbitrary assumptions about how long those judges governed whose periods of government Scripture does not specify. He does not consider the difficulties Spinoza raises in §§18–26.

20. See, for example, Num. 32:13 or Josh. 5:6.

21. See Josephus, *Antiquities* V, i, 29 (which, however, gives 25 as the number of years Joshua ruled).

Cushan-rishathaim had the people in subjection for ...	8 years ²²
Othniel, the son of Kenaz, judged ^{23**} for ...	40 years ²⁴
Eglon, king of Moab, ruled the people for ...	18 years ²⁵
Ehud and Shamgar were judges for ...	80 years ²⁶
15 Jabin, king of Canaan, had the people in subjection ...	20 years ²⁷
Afterward the people had peace for ...	40 years ²⁸
Then the people were in subjection to the Midianites for ...	7 years ²⁹
In the time of Gideon the people were free for ...	40 years ³⁰
They were under the rule of Abimelech for ...	3 years ³¹

22. See Judg. 3:8.

23. **[ADN. XVI] Rabbi Levi ben Gerson and others believe that these forty years, which Scripture says passed in freedom [Judges 3:11], nevertheless begin with the death of Joshua, and so include the preceding eight years, in which the people were subject to Cushan-rishathaim, and that the eighteen years which followed [Judges 3:14] are also to be included in the eighty years that Ehud and Shamgar judged. Thus they believe that remaining years of bondage are always included under those Scripture says passed in freedom. But because Scripture expressly reckons how many years the Hebrews spent in bondage and how many in freedom, and in Judges 2:18 expressly tells us that the Hebrews always flourished under the judges, it is quite evident that this Rabbi (otherwise a very learned man) and those who follow in his footsteps are correcting Scripture, rather than explaining it, when they try to resolve such difficulties.

So do those who maintain that in that general calculation of years Scripture wanted to indicate only the periods when there was a Jewish state, and could not have included in the general account the years of anarchy or of bondage, as being inauspicious and, as it were, interruptions of the government. For indeed, Scripture usually does pass over in silence periods of anarchy; but it usually treats years of bondage no less than those of freedom, nor is it accustomed, as they fancy, to delete them from the annals.

That Ezra meant to include, in that general summing up of years in 1 Kings [6], absolutely all the years from the exodus from Egypt is a thing so manifest that no one practiced in Scripture has ever questioned it. For to pass over now the words of the text itself, the Genealogy of David given at the end of Ruth [4:18–22] and in 1 Chronicles 2[:11–15] hardly allows so large a sum of years. For Nahshon was the leader of the tribe of Judah in the second year after the exodus from Egypt (see Numbers 7:11–12). So he died in the wilderness, and his son Salmon crossed the Jordan with Joshua. But this Salmon, according to the Genealogy of David, was David's great-great-grandfather. If we subtract from this sum of 480 years the four years of Solomon's reign, the seventy years of David's life, and the forty passed in the desert, we will find that David was born in the 366th year after the crossing of the Jordan and consequently, that it is necessary that his father, grandfather, great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather fathered children when each of them was ninety years old.

24. See Judg. 3:11.

25. See Judg. 3:14.

26. Spinoza's basis for this is presumably Judg. 3:30–31, though those verses suggest that the period of 80 years mentioned in 3:30 counts only the period when Ehud was a judge. The text gives no information about the length of time Shamgar was a judge.

27. See Judg. 4:3.

28. This would be during the period when Deborah and Barak were judges. Judg. 4–5.

29. See Judg. 6:1.

30. See Judg. 8:28.

31. See Judg. 9:22.

20	Tola, the son of Puah, judged for ...	23 years ³²
	Jair judged for ...	22 years ³³
	The people were in subjection to the Philistines and the Ammonites for ...	18 years ³⁴
	Jephthah judged for ...	6 years ³⁵
	Ibzan of Bethlehem judged for ...	7 years ³⁶
25	Elon the Zebulunite judged for ...	10 years ³⁷
	Abdon the Pirathonite judged for ...	8 years ³⁸
	The people were in subjection to the Philistines for ...	40 years ³⁹
	Samson judged ^{40**} for ...	20 years ⁴¹
	Eli judged for ...	40 years ⁴²
30	Before Samuel freed them, the people were again in subjection to the Philistines for ... 20 years ⁴³	
	David reigned ...	40 years ⁴⁴
	Before Solomon built the temple, he reigned for ...	4 years ⁴⁵

[III/133] The sum of all these years is 580.⁴⁶

[18] To these years we must add, next, those of the period in which, after the death of Joshua, the Hebrew Republic flourished (before Cushan-rishathaim subjugated it [Judges 3:8]). I believe this period

32. Judg. 10:2.

33. Judg. 10:3.

34. Judg. 10:7–8.

35. Judg. 12:7.

36. Judg. 12:9.

37. Judg. 12:11.

38. Judg. 12:14.

39. Judg. 13:1.

40. **[ADN. XVII] Samson was born after the Philistines had subjugated the Hebrews. [Saint-Glavin: One might doubt whether these twenty years should be counted under the years of freedom or whether they are included in the forty immediately preceding years, during which the people were under the yoke of the Philistines. For myself, I confess that I find it more probable and credible that the Hebrews recovered their freedom when the leaders of the Philistines perished with Samson. Also, I have counted these twenty years of Samson among those during which the yoke of the Philistines lasted only because Samson was born after the Philistines had subjugated the Hebrews, besides the fact that in the treatise on the Sabbath there is mention of a certain book on Jerusalem, where it is said that Samson judged the people forty years. But it is not a question only of these years.]

41. Judg. 15:20.

42. 1 Sam. 4:18.

43. 1 Sam. 7:2.

44. 1 Kings 2:11.

45. 1 Kings 6:1.

46. In his *Antiquities* VIII, iii, 1, Josephus had given a figure of 592 years between the exodus and the building of the temple, but had not discussed the inconsistency between that figure and 1 Kings 6:1.

lasted many years. For I cannot persuade myself that immediately
 5 after the death of Joshua everyone who had seen his wonders perished
 at once, and that the next generation straightaway abandoned the
 laws and fell from the pinnacle of virtue to the depths of profligacy
 and negligence. Nor can I believe that no sooner had this happened
 than Cushan-rishathaim subjugated them. [19] But since each of these
 10 developments requires almost a generation, there is no doubt that in
 Judges 2:7, 9 and 10, Scripture covers the stories of many years, which
 it has passed over in silence.⁴⁷

We must also add [to the figure of 580] the years during which
 Samuel was a Judge, which are not given in Scripture, [20] and the years
 of the reign of Saul, which I omitted in the above calculation, because
 15 what Scripture says about him does not adequately establish how long
 he reigned. It is said, indeed, in 1 Samuel 13:1, that Saul reigned for
 two years, but that text is mutilated and from the narrative itself we
 infer a greater number of years. [21] That the text is mutilated, no one
 who has even the slightest acquaintance with the Hebrew language can
 20 doubt. For it begins thus: *בן שנה שאול במלכו ושתי שנים מלך על ישראל*, *Saul*
was a year old when he reigned, and he reigned over Israel for two years.
 Who, I ask, does not see that the text omits Saul's age when he began
 to reign?⁴⁸ [22] But I believe no one doubts that the account of his
 reign implies that it lasted longer than two years. For 1 Samuel 27:7
 25 mentions that David stayed among the Philistines, to whom he fled on
 account of Saul, for a year and four months. So from this calculation
 the remaining events must have happened in eight months. I suppose
 no one believes this. Josephus, at least, at the end of book six of his
Antiquities, corrects the text in the following way: *Saul, therefore, reigned*
 30 *for eighteen years while Samuel was alive, and for two more after his death*.⁴⁹

47. The presence of multiple authors/editors in the first three chapters of Judges makes the chronology of the events described there very unclear, but Spinoza's verdict seems reasonable. See §14 and the annotation there.

48. Modern translations acknowledge the defectiveness of the text. The NRSV translation reads as follows: "Saul was . . . years old when he began to reign; and he reigned . . . and two years over Israel." The HCSB annotation comments that in the first lacuna the number is lacking in the Hebrew text, and that in the second, "two is not the entire number; something has dropped out." Similarly in the NJPS edition and Anchor Samuel. The problem is not just the improbability of Saul's beginning his reign at the age of one, but, as Manasseh puts it, that "so many events took place during Saul's reign, that it seems incredible that they could have occurred in the small space of two years" (1842/1972, II, 46). When Manasseh discusses this passage (in Part II, questions 8 and 12), rather than question the integrity of the text, he proposes metaphorical interpretations of the passage.

49. Josephus, *Antiquities* VI, xiv, 9. This quotation indicates that Spinoza is reading Josephus in the Latin translation made by the order of Cassiodorus. The Greek text says that Saul reigned for twenty-two years after the death of Samuel. For further discussion, see ALM.

[23] Indeed, this whole narrative in chapter 13 does not agree at all with the preceding chapters. At the end of chapter 7 it is related that the Philistines were so subdued by the Hebrews that they did not dare to cross the borders of Israel during the life of Samuel.⁵⁰ But here [in ch. 13, it is related] that (while Samuel was still alive) the Philistines invaded the Hebrews and reduced them to such wretchedness and poverty that they were left without arms to defend themselves, or even the means of making arms. [24] It would surely cost me sweat enough if I were to try to reconcile all the accounts contained in this first book of Samuel so that they all looked like they were written down and ordered by one Historian. But, to return to the point I was making, we must add the years of Saul's reign to the above calculation.

[III/134]

[25] Finally, I have also not counted the years of anarchy of the Hebrews,⁵¹ because Scripture does not establish what that number was. That is to say, I do not find it established what that period was in which the events narrated in Judges 17–21 happened.

10 [26] These considerations show very clearly that we cannot establish a correct calculation of the years [between the exodus and the building of the temple] from the narratives themselves and that the narratives do not agree in one and the same calculation, but presuppose quite different ones. So we must confess that these narratives were gathered from different writers, and still haven't been put in order or examined.

15 [27] There seems to have been no less a discrepancy concerning the calculation of years in the books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah and the books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.⁵² For it was said in the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel that Jehoram, the son of Ahab, began to reign in the second year of the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat (see 2 Kings 1:17). But in the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, it was held that Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat

50. The reference is to 1 Sam. 7:13–14, verses whose inconsistency with other parts of the narrative troubled commentators as long ago as Kimchi, who interpreted the phrase “all the days of Samuel” to mean “all the years in which Samuel exercised sole authority, before he became old and delegated his duties to his sons.” The consensus of modern editors is to regard them as insertions of the Deuteronomic editor. Cf. Anchor Samuel, I, 147.

51. That is, the years following the death of Samson, in which no king ruled, and no judge is mentioned.

52. Spinoza explains the inconsistency between 2 Kings 1:17 and 2 Kings 8:16 by contending that the editors of 2 Kings relied on inconsistent sources, now lost, without eliminating the inconsistency. Kimchi had explained the inconsistency by supposing that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign while his father was still alive, but did not officially become king until his death, which was in the fifth year of the reign of Jehoram, the son of Ahab. Some later commentators accepted this solution (ALM).

began to reign in the fifth year of the reign of Jehoram, the son of Ahab (see 2 Kings 8:16).

[28] If anyone wants to compare the narratives of the book of Chronicles with those of the books of Kings, he will find numerous similar discrepancies, which I don't need to recount here.⁵³ Much less do I need to discuss the devices authors use to try to reconcile these
 25 accounts. For the Rabbis are completely crazy. The commentators I have read indulge in idle fancies and hypotheses, and in the end, completely corrupt the language itself. [29] For example, when it is said in 2 Chronicles [22:2] that *Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he reigned*, some indulge in the hypothesis that these years are calculated from the reign of Omri, not from the birth of Ahaziah.⁵⁴ If they could
 30 show that this was what the author of the books of Chronicles meant, I wouldn't hesitate to say that he didn't know how to express himself. And they invent many other things of this kind. If these things were true, I would say, without qualification, that the ancient Hebrews were completely ignorant both of their own language and of how to tell a story in an orderly way. I wouldn't recognize any principle or standard
 [III/135] for interpreting Scripture. Instead, we could invent anything we like.

[30] If anyone thinks I'm speaking too generally here, and without adequate foundation, I ask him to show us some definite order in these accounts, which Historians could imitate without fault in their Chronicles. And while he's interpreting these accounts and trying to
 5 reconcile them, let him respect the expressions and ways of speaking, and of organizing and connecting statements, so strictly, and let him explain them in such a way, that we too could imitate them in our writing, according to his explanation.^{55**} If he does this, I'll immediately surrender to him, and he'll be a great oracle for me.⁵⁶ [31] For
 10 I confess that although I've long sought such an explanation, I've still never been able to find anything like it. I add that I write nothing here which I haven't thought about long and hard. Although I was instructed from childhood in the common opinions concerning Scripture, in the

53. In his discussion of 1 and 2 Kings in his *Conciliator* Manasseh identifies nearly two dozen passages where the accounts in those books are prima facie inconsistent with those in 1 and 2 Chronicles.

54. By contrast, 2 Kings 8:26 gives Ahaziah's age as twenty-two at the beginning of his reign. In Part II, qu. 41, Manasseh discusses this problem (recognized as early as *Seder Olam*) and ascribes the solution Spinoza rejects to Gersonides. For the proposals of Rashi and Kimchi, see ALM.

55. **[ADN. XVIII] Otherwise they correct the words of Scripture rather than explain them.

56. Literally, "he will be a great Apollo for me," echoing a line from Virgil's *Eclogues* III, 404.

end I couldn't help but admit these things.⁵⁷ But there's no reason to detain the reader long regarding these matters, or to challenge him to
 15 such a hopeless task. It was only necessary to propose this to explain my position more clearly. [32] Now I proceed to the other things I've undertaken to note concerning the fate of these books.

What needs to be noted, in addition to the things we've just shown, is that Posterity hasn't preserved these books with such diligence that
 20 no errors have crept in. For the early Scribes noticed many doubtful readings, as well as some (though not all) of the mutilated passages. I'm not arguing now that these errors are such as to make difficulties for the reader. I believe they are of little importance, at least for those who read the Scriptures with a more independent judgment. This I can certainly affirm: that I haven't noticed, concerning moral teachings,
 25 any error, or any alternative reading, which could make them obscure or doubtful.

[33] But most people don't admit that any defect at all has cropped up even in the other parts of Scripture. Instead they maintain that by a certain particular providence God has kept the whole Bible uncorrupted.⁵⁸ They say the variant readings are signs of the most profound
 30 mysteries, and they allege the same about the asterisks which occur in the middle of a paragraph twenty-eight times.⁵⁹ Indeed, they claim that great secrets are contained in the very markings of the letters.⁶⁰ [34] I don't know whether they've said these things out of foolishness and credulous devotion, or out of arrogance and malice, so that they alone would be believed to possess God's secrets. I do know this: I've read nothing in their writings which had the air of a secret, but only childish thoughts. I've also read, and for that matter, known person-
 [III/136] ally, certain Kabbalistic triflers. I've never been able to be sufficiently amazed by their madness.⁶¹

[35] But I believe no one doubts that errors have crept in—not anyone of sound judgment, anyway, who has read that text about Saul (the one we appealed to above [in §20], 1 Samuel 13:1), and also 2 Samuel

57. A rare and important autobiographical statement, which unfortunately presents translation problems. I have rendered *imbutus fuerim* as *I was instructed in*; Elwes has *I was imbued with*. Either is possible; Elwes' rendering suggests that for a long time Spinoza accepted the views he was taught; mine allows the possibility that Spinoza may have become skeptical about those teachings at an early age.

58. This was, for example, the view of the Westminster Confession. See ch. I, sec. viii.

59. Later (in ix, 63) Spinoza will give Gen. 4:8 as an example.

60. ALM note that Johannes Buxtorf seems to be among those under attack here.

61. Possibly a reference to Manasseh ben Israel, though he would not have been the only Kabbalist in the Amsterdam Jewish community. See Katchen 1984, ch. 2. And on the Kabbalah generally, see Scholem 1974. ALM note that Spinoza possessed works by Joseph del Medigo and doubtless knew Abraham Herrera's *Puerta del Cielo*.

5 6:2, and David arose and went, with all the people who were with him from Judah, that they might carry off the ark of God from there. Here also no one can fail to see that the place they went to has been omitted—that is, Kirjath-jearim,^{62**} from which they carried off the ark.⁶³

[36] We also can't deny that 2 Samuel 13:37 is confused and mutilated:
 10 and Absalom fled and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Gesbur; and he mourned his son every day, and Absalom fled and went to Gesbur and stayed there three years.^{64**} I know that previously I have noted other things of this kind, but at the moment I cannot recall them.

[37] The marginal notes⁶⁵ found throughout the Hebrew Manuscripts
 15 were doubtful readings. If you attend to the fact that most of them have arisen from the great similarity some Hebrew letters have to others, you will not be able to doubt this. כ *kaf* is very similar to ב *bet*, י *jod* to ו *vau*, ד *dalet* to ר *res*, and so on. So, in 2 Samuel 5:24, where it is written, בשמעך, and in that (time) in which you hear, in the margin
 20 there is כשמעך, when you hear, and in Judges 21:22, where it is written, והיה כי יבואו אבותם או אחיהם לרוב, and when their fathers or brothers come to us in a multitude (i.e., often), in the margin there is לריב, to dispute.

[38] Similarly, a great many variant readings have arisen from the use of the letters they call Quiescent, letters whose pronunciation is

62. **[ADN. XIX] Kirjath-jearim is also called Baale-judah. So Kimchi and others think that *baale yebudab*, which I have here translated *from the people of Judah*, is the name of the town. But they are mistaken, because *baale* is plural in number. Again, if we compare this text of Samuel with the one in 1 Chronicles [13:6], we shall see that David did not get up and go from Baale, but that he went to there. For if the author of 2 Samuel were concerned to at least indicate the place from which David carried off the ark, then to speak proper Hebrew he would have said: *and David arose, and set out etc. from Baale-judah, and from there he carried off the ark of God.*

63. Here the judgment of modern scholarship would seem to be that Spinoza is right to think the Masoretic text corrupt, but wrong in his conjecture about how the text should read. Cf. Anchor Samuel, II, 162–63.

64. **[ADN. XX] Those who have been involved in commenting on this text have corrected it in the following way: *and Absalom fled, and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Gesbur; where he stayed for three years, and David mourned his son all the time he was at Gesbur.* But if that's what they call interpretation, and if we're permitted to give ourselves such license in the explanation of Scripture, and to transpose in that way whole phrases, either by joining them or by cutting something out, I acknowledge that we are permitted to corrupt Scripture, and to give it as many different forms as we like, as if it were a piece of wax. [Spinoza's judgment that the received text is corrupt is evidently correct, though the comment in the annotation may be unduly harsh. See Anchor Samuel, II, 332.]

65. Printed Hebrew Bibles typically contain more than a thousand marginal notes reflecting differences between the consonantal text and the version of the text read in services. The latter is known as the *qere* (what is to be read), whereas the text is known as the *kethib* (what is written). Sometimes these notes seem clearly intended to correct textual errors; in other cases, they clearly give variant readings. Sometimes their purpose is not clear. See NJPS, p. xii, n. 5. ALM note that the danger of confusing similar letters was a common theme among Hebraists in this period.

very often inaudible, so that one is indiscriminately taken for the other.

- 25 E.g., in Leviticus 25:30 it is written, וְקָם הַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר בְּעִיר אֲשֶׁר לֹא חוֹמָה, *and the house which is in a city which has no wall will be made secure*, but in the margin there is אֲשֶׁר לוֹ חוֹמָה, *which has a wall*.

[39] These things are clear enough in themselves, but [I mention them because] I want to reply to the arguments of certain Pharisees, who try to persuade us that the Writers of the Sacred books themselves
30 attached the marginal notes, or gave indications for them, in order to signify some mystery. The first of these arguments, which doesn't much move me, they take from the practice of reading the Scriptures. They ask: if these notes were attached because of variant readings, which later generations could not decide between, why has the practice prevailed of always retaining the meaning of the marginal note?⁶⁶ Why, they ask,
[III/137] did [the later generations] note the meaning they wanted to retain in the margin? They ought to have written the books themselves as they wanted them to be read, instead of relegating to the margin the meaning and reading they most approved.

- [40] Their second argument, drawn from the nature of the thing
5 itself, seems to have an air of plausibility. Suppose the errors are not intentional, but have crept into the Manuscripts by chance. What happens by chance, happens now one way, now another. But in the Pentateuch, with only one exception, the word נַעֲרָה, *girl*, is always written defectively, contrary to the rule of grammar, without the letter ה, *he*, whereas in the margin it is written correctly, according to the universal
10 rule of grammar.⁶⁷ Has this, too, happened because someone's hand erred in copying? By what fate could it have happened that the pen always acted too quickly whenever this word occurred? Again, [the scribes of the later generations] could easily, without any misgivings, have made good this defect, and corrected it according to the rules of grammar.
[41] Therefore, since these readings did not happen by chance, and
15 they did not correct defects so clear, [the Pharisees] conclude from this that the first Writers made these [errors] according to a definite plan, to signify something by them.

We can easily reply to these arguments. I see little merit in [the Pharisees'] arguing from the practice which has prevailed among [the later generations]. [42] I don't know what superstition could have per-
20 suaded them to do. Perhaps they did these things because they regarded

66. So the NJPS edition normally bases its translation on the *qere*, noting that although the *qere* was preserved only in the margin, the Masoretes gave it greater weight than the *kethib*. The quotation from Judges 21 at the end of §37 is an instance of this.

67. The omission of the final consonant changes the meaning of the word from *young woman* to *young man*.

each reading as equally good *or* acceptable, and therefore, in order that neither of them should be neglected, wanted one to be written and the other to be read. In so great a matter, they were afraid to determine their judgment, lest in their uncertainty they choose the false [reading] in place of the true one. So they did not want to prefer either one to the other, as they would have done, without qualification, if they had commanded only one reading to be both written and read, especially
 25 since the marginal notes are not written in the Sacred books.⁶⁸ [43] Or perhaps it happened because, although certain things were copied correctly, they still wanted them to be read differently, as they had noted them in the margin. Therefore, they established the general practice of reading the Bible according to the marginal notes.

[44] But now I shall say what cause moved the Scribes to note certain
 30 things explicitly in the margin as to be read. Not all the marginal notes are doubtful readings, but [the Scribes] also noted readings which were alien to their usage, viz. obsolete words and those which the customs of their time did not permit to be read in a public assembly. [45] For the ancient Writers, without evil intent, used to indicate things by their proper names, without any courtly euphemisms. But after wicked conduct and extravagant living became prevalent, things which the ancients
 [III/138] said without obscenity began to be considered obscene. There was no need to change Scripture itself for this reason. Nevertheless, out of consideration for the weakness of ordinary people, they introduced the custom of using more respectable terms for intercourse and excrement when the works were read in public; and they indicated these terms
 5 in the marginal notes.

[46] Finally, whatever the reason why it became customary to read and interpret the Scriptures according to the marginal readings, at least it was not that the true interpretation must be found only there. For not only do the Rabbis in the Talmud often depart from the Masoretes
 10 and have other readings which they approve, as I shall soon show, other things are found in the margin which seem less sanctioned by linguistic usage. [47] E.g., in 2 Samuel 14:22 is written אשר עשה המלך את דבר עבדו, *because the King has acted according to the advice of his servant*, a construction which is entirely regular and agrees with that in v. 15 of
 15 the same chapter. But what is in the margin (עבדך, *of thy servant*) does not agree with the person of the verb. [48] Similarly, in 2 Samuel 16:23 is written כאשר ישאל בדבר האלהים, *and when (one) consults the word of God*

68. In the unpointed scrolls read in the Synagogues, although the *kethib* is retained in the text, the *qere* is not given in the margin. The reader is expected to know when to read the *qere* instead of the *kethib*.

(i.e., when it is consulted). In the margin אִי, *someone*, is added as the subject of the verb. But this does not seem to have been done accurately enough, for the ordinary usage of this language is to use impersonal
 20 verbs in the third person singular of the active verb, as Grammarians know very well. In this way we find many notes which simply can't be preferred to what is written.

[49] As for the Pharisees' second argument, what we've just said enables us to respond to it easily too. In addition to doubtful readings,
 25 the Scribes also noted obsolete words. For there's no doubt that in the Hebrew language, as in every other, subsequent usage made many things obsolete and antiquated, that the last Scribes found such things in the Bible,⁶⁹ and that, as we've said, they noted all of them, so that when the texts were read in public they would be read according to
 30 the usage accepted at that time. [50] That's why the word נָעַר, *na'ar*, is found everywhere with a marginal note; in antiquity it was of common gender, and meant the same thing *juvenis* does in Latin [i.e., a young person of either sex]. Similarly, the ancients pronounced the capital city of the Hebrews יְרוּשָׁלַם, *yerushalem*, not יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, *yerushalayim*. I think the same concerning the pronoun, הוּא, [which can mean either] *he* [or] *she*; the later Hebrews changed the ו to a י (a frequent change in the
 [III/139] Hebrew language) when they wanted to signify the feminine gender; but the ancients were accustomed to distinguish the feminine from the masculine of this pronoun only by vowels [which were not, at that time, a part of the written language]. [51] Moreover, the irregularity of certain verbs was also different at different times. And finally, the
 5 ancients used the paragogic letters, הָאֵמֶתִי, with a refinement peculiar to their own times. I could illustrate all these things here with many examples, but I do not want to detain the reader in tedious material.

[52] If you ask, "how do you know these things?" I reply: because I've found them frequently among the most ancient Biblical Writers, and yet saw that later writers did not want to imitate them. This is the
 10 only way words can be known to be obsolete in the other languages, even in languages now dead.

[53] But perhaps someone will still insist: [i] since I've maintained that most of these notes are doubtful readings, why don't we ever find more than two readings of the same passage? why not sometimes three, or more? Again, [ii] certain things in the Written texts (which are

69. Although it is difficult to date the earliest parts of the Hebrew Bible, there is apparently a consensus that they go back at least to some time in the tenth century B.C.E., and possibly considerably earlier. The latest parts can be more confidently dated to the early second century B.C.E. (see Kugel 2007, 5). This offers considerable scope for linguistic change.

15 indicated correctly in the margin) are so clearly contrary to Grammar that it's just not credible that the scribes could have been in difficulty about them and doubted which was the true reading.

[54] To these objections, too, it's easy to reply. To the first, [i] I say that there *were* more readings than we find noted in our manuscripts.
 20 For the Talmud notes many which the Masoretes neglected. The authors of the Talmud depart from the Masoretes so openly in many places that that superstitious⁷⁰ corrector of the Bomberg Bible⁷¹ was finally compelled to confess in his preface that he doesn't know how to reconcile them, ולא ידענא לתרוצי אלא כדתיצנא לעיל דארחיה דגמרא לפלוגי על המסורת, *we*
 25 *don't know how to reply here, except as we've done above, that the practice of the Talmud is to contradict the Masoretes.* So we can have no adequate foundation for maintaining that there were never more than two readings of one passage.

[55] Nevertheless, I grant readily—indeed, I believe—that not more than two readings of one passage have ever been found. And that for
 30 two reasons. First, because the cause we've shown for the variety of readings which exist cannot allow more than two. We've shown that they've come mainly from the similarity of certain letters. [56] So the doubt almost always came back in the end to this: which of two letters (whose use is very frequent) ought to have been written, *beth*, ב, or *kaph*, כ, *yod*, י, or *waw*, ו, *daleth*, ד, or *resh*, ר, etc.? So it could often
 [III/140] happen that either one would yield a tolerable meaning. Again, [in some cases the doubt might arise from the question] whether a syllable was long or short, where the length of the syllable is determined by [the presence or absence of] the Quiescent letters. Moreover, not all of the notes are doubtful readings. For we've said that many notes
 5 were inserted for the sake of decency, or to explain obsolete and antiquated words.

70. Latin: *superstitiosus*, which can, of course, mean superstitious, but may also mean nothing more than a blind adherence to rules.

71. Daniel Bomberg, one of the earliest printers of Hebrew-language books, published the first Rabbinic Bible (*Mikra'ot Gedolot*), consisting of the Hebrew text with Targums and the standard commentaries (including those of Rashi and Ibn Ezra) in 4 volumes, in 1517–18. Spinoza's *superstitiosus corrector* was R. Jacob ben Hayyim, who edited the second edition of the Bomberg Bible, which appeared in 1524–25. According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, R. Jacob believed in the importance of the masorah as the guarantor of the correct text, and “went to great pains . . . to secure as many codices with a masorah as possible.” But as he discovered that “the masorah did not harmonize with the majority of the codices,” he had to exercise his discretion. Later Bibles in the sixteenth century tend to follow his text. The Bible on which Spinoza primarily relied was the four-volume rabbinic Bible published by Buxtorf in 1618. The Bibles produced by Buxtorf were modeled on the Bomberg Bible, but were influenced by Sephardic, rather than Ashkenazic, traditions.

[57] The second reason I'm persuaded that not more than two readings of one passage are found is that I believe the Scribes found very few copies, perhaps not more than two or three. The treatise of the Scribes, סופרים,⁷² ch. 6, mentions only three, which they hypothesize
 10 were found in the time of Ezra, because they claim that these notes were inserted by Ezra himself. [58] However that may be, if they had three, we can easily conceive that in a given passage two of them always agreed. Indeed, it would've been marvelous if, with only three copies, they found three different readings of one and the same passage.

15 By what fate did it happen that after Ezra there were so few copies? If you read 1 Maccabees 1[:54–61] or Josephus' *Antiquities* XII, v, you won't wonder any longer.⁷³ Indeed, it will seem marvelous that after such extensive and enduring persecution they were able to retain those few. I
 20 think no one who has read that account with even moderate attention has any doubt about this.

[59] So we see why there aren't more than two doubtful readings anywhere. The fact that there are never more than two readings is no reason to infer that in the annotated passages the Bible was deliberately written incorrectly to signify some mystery.

25 [60] [ii] As for the second objection [§53] – that certain things are written so incorrectly that they couldn't have doubted their being contrary to correct usage in every period, and ought to have just corrected them, without noting them in the margin – this doesn't concern me. I'm not bound to know what religious scruple moved them not to
 30 do this. [61] Perhaps they did it out of integrity, because they wanted to hand the Bible down to posterity in whatever way they themselves had found it in a few originals, and to note the discrepancies between the originals, not, indeed, as doubtful readings, but as variants. I have called them doubtful only because in almost every case I have no idea which is to be preferred to the other.

[62] Finally, in addition to these doubtful readings, the Scribes also
 [III/141] noted a number of mutilated passages by inserting an empty space in the middle of a paragraph. The Masoretes pass on twenty-eight of these passages where an empty space is inserted in the middle of a paragraph. I don't know whether they also believe that some mystery lies hidden

72. Spinoza is referring to an extra-canonical treatise, added at the end of the order Nezikin in the Babylonian Talmud. In ch. 6, §4 we read: "R. Simeon ben Lakish says they discovered three books in the Temple." He tells how they compared their texts, and in each case preferred the reading given by two manuscripts over that given by only one (ALM).

73. The texts cited describe the attempt of Antiochus in the second century B.C.E. to destroy Judaism by having copies of the Bible burned and those found possessing them killed.

5 in that number. Moreover, the Pharisees scrupulously keep to a certain quantity of space [in indicating these lacunae]. [63] There is an example of this—to mention one—in Genesis 4:8, where it is written: *and Cain said to Abel, his brother; . . . and it happened, while they were in the field, that Cain etc.*¹ An empty space is left where we were expecting to learn
 10 what Cain said to his brother. Besides the things already noted, there are twenty-eight passages of this kind, left untouched by the Scribes. Many of these, however, wouldn't appear mutilated if there weren't a space inserted. But that's enough on these matters.

[III/141]

CHAPTER X

*The Remaining Books of the Old Testament
 Examined in the same way as above*

[1] I pass to the remaining books of the Old Testament. About the two books of Chronicles I have nothing certain and worth noting, except that they were written long after Ezra,² and perhaps after Judas Maccabee
 20 restored the temple.^{3**} For in 1 Chronicles 9 the Historian relates *which*

1. Modern editions vary in their treatment of this case, sometimes indicating the omission in the Masoretic text with an ellipsis and a note (as in the NJPS translation), sometimes inserting the missing words in brackets, from the Septuagint (as in HCSB). What Cain said to Abel was "Let us go out to the field." In this case the lacuna would be quite obvious even without the empty space.

2. Talmudic tradition made Ezra the author of the genealogies of 1 Chronicles "up to his own time" and attributed the rest of Chronicles to Nehemiah. See Baba Bathra 15a. Ezra 7:1–7 identifies Ezra as a scholarly priest, contemporary with Artaxerxes (probably Artaxerxes I, who reigned from 465 to 424), who went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes' reign. Nehemiah was a Jewish official in the service of Artaxerxes, charged in 445 with rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem. Spinoza mistakenly thinks Ezra and Nehemiah were sixth-century figures. See below, n. 3, and ADN. XXIV at x, 27.

3. **[ADN. XXI] This suspicion—if what is certain can, indeed, be called a suspicion—is inferred from the Genealogy of King Jeconiah, which is given in 1 Chronicles 3 from vs. 17, and carried on as far as the sons of Elioenai, who were thirteenth in line from him. It should be noted that when Jeconiah was put in prison, he did not have children, but seems to have fathered children in prison, insofar as we may conjecture from the names he gave them. As for grandchildren, as far as we may again conjecture from their names, he seems to have had them after he was freed from prison. So *Pedaiah* (which means *God has freed*), who is said in this chapter to have been [Saint-Glaine: the father of Zerubbabel, was born] in the 37th or 38th year of Jeconiah's captivity, i.e., thirty-three years before Cyrus ended the Babylonian Captivity. Zerubbabel, whom Cyrus put in charge of the Jews, seems thus to have been thirteen or fourteen at most.

But I have preferred to pass over these things in silence, for reasons which the oppressiveness of our times does not permit me to explain. For the wise a hint is enough.

families first (i.e., in the time of Ezra) *lived in Jerusalem*.⁴ And again in 1 Chronicles 9:17 he gives information about the *gatekeepers*, two of

Anyone who is willing to carefully review the account of all of Jeconiah's descendants in 1 Chronicles 3:17–24, and to compare the Hebrew text with the Septuagint version, will be able to see without difficulty that these books were published after the second restoration of the city by Judas Maccabee, at a time when the descendants of Jeconiah had lost the rule, not before.

[At the beginning of the last paragraph Marchand's version of this note has: "reasons which the injustices and reigning superstition oppressiveness of our times . . ."

Jeconiah (aka Jehoiachin) was the king of Judah who was taken into captivity in Babylon in 597 BCE, and kept under house arrest until he was released by King Evil-merodach thirty-seven years later (see 2 Kings 24:8–12, 25:27–30). Spinoza evidently inferred from Pedaiah's name that he was born around the time of Jeconiah's release, and assumed that Pedaiah would not have fathered Zerubbabel before he was around twenty. Spinoza's calculations assume that the captivity lasted seventy years. (This was based on a tradition going back to Jer. 25:11–12.) Modern research indicates that the captivity was somewhat shorter than that, lasting from 597 to 538.

Spinoza arrived at the count of thirteen generations from Jeconiah to the sons of Elioenai by following the Septuagint translation, which renders verse 21 differently than the Masoretic text. The latter yields only nine generations from Jeconiah to the sons of Elioenai, not thirteen. (Recent English translations—the NRSV and NJPS—also follow the Septuagint.)

There are still puzzles about this note. Why is Spinoza so certain in the note that the books of Chronicles were written after the Maccabean restoration of the temple (i.e., after 164 BCE)? Modern scholars put the date of Chronicles much earlier than that (though not so early as to permit Ezra to have been the author). Anchor Chronicles, I, 101–17, argues for a date in the late fourth or early third century (though it allows that Chron. 3:17–24 may be a late addition to an earlier text).

The solution here seems to be that Spinoza is assuming, not only that twelve generations passed after Jeconiah went into captivity, but also that on average the gap between generations was in excess of thirty-five years. There is precedent for this. Some biblical scholars have assumed as many as forty years per generation. Modern scholars favor an average of twenty-five or even twenty years. (On this see Anchor Chronicles, I, 329–30.)

More difficult is the question why Spinoza thinks the oppressiveness (or injustices and superstition) of his times will not permit him to do more than hint at conclusions he passes over in silence. ALM (followed by Totaro) suggest that perhaps the problem is that the genealogy in Chronicles is inconsistent with that given in Matt. 1:12–16. But reaching this conclusion would not require comparison of the Masoretic text with the Septuagint. The differences between the Masoretic genealogy and that in Matthew are obvious enough. (So for that matter, are the differences between the genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3.) Perhaps more relevant is the fact that Matt. 1:17 claims that only fourteen generations passed between Jeconiah and the Messiah. This would make one of the sons of Elioenai, and not Joseph, the father figure in the household in which Jesus grew up.]

4. Spinoza quotes 1 Chron. 9:2–3, with some omissions. Why does he place Ezra in the time of the first return from Babylon? Partly, it seems, because Ezra is listed at Neh. 12:1 as among those who returned with Zerubbabel. Cf. ADN. XXIV at x, 27. And partly also, it seems, because he took Ezra 7:1 to indicate that the events described in that and succeeding chapters of Ezra happened soon after the sixth-century events described in preceding chapters. (Suggested by Gary Knoppers in personal communication.) Apparently there was confusion in the rabbinic tradition about the chronology of the Persian kings. (Certainly there is confusion about this in Josephus, *Antiquities* XI, v.)

whom are also mentioned in Nehemiah 11:19. This shows that these books were written long after the rebuilding of the city.⁵

25 [2] However that may be, nothing is apparent to me about the true Writer of these books, nor about their authority, utility and teaching. Indeed, I cannot sufficiently wonder that they have been accepted as Sacred by the people who removed the book of wisdom, Tobias, and the rest of the so-called apocrypha from the canon of the sacred books.⁶ Nevertheless, it is not my intent to lessen their authority; since everyone
30 has accepted them, I too leave them as they are.

[3] The Psalms were also collected, and divided up into five books, in the time of the second temple.⁷ For according to the testimony of Philo Judaeus, Psalm 88 was edited while King Jehoiakin was still kept
[III/142] in captivity in Babylon, and Psalm 89 when the same King obtained his freedom. I don't believe Philo would ever have said this unless either it was the received opinion in his time or he had accepted it from others worthy of trust.⁸

[4] I believe the Proverbs of Solomon were also collected at the same time, or at the earliest, in the time of King Josiah, because the
5 last verse of ch. 24 says, *These also are the Proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, transcribed.*⁹ [5] But here I cannot

5. Huet complained in his *Demonstratio* (207) that it was not clear why Spinoza thought these passages supported his conclusion. Droetto/Giancotti suggest that ADN. XXI is intended to reply in advance to such critics.

6. Cf. ix, 28, where Spinoza comments on the discrepancies between the narratives in Kings and those in Chronicles. The book of wisdom he refers to is the work now known as "The Wisdom of Solomon." Cf. also xviii, 16, where Spinoza expresses skepticism about the Chronicler's account of a battle.

7. The Talmud ascribed primary authorship of the Psalms to David—though it credited him with also collecting the work of earlier authors, going back as far as Adam, Abraham and Moses (Baba Bathra 14b). Augustine at one time argued that David was the author of all 150 psalms, explaining those which, like 137, seemed to date from a later time as having been written through the gift of prophecy (*City of God* XVII, xiv). Spinoza's conclusion here focuses on the final editing and would be generally accepted now (cf. Kugel 2007, ch. 26). Even in Spinoza's own day Huet seems to accept that some of the Psalms date from the post-exilic period (*Demonstratio*, 226–28).

8. Spinoza refers here to the work he will cite in x, 26, under the title *The Book of Times*. This is not, as he seems to think, a genuine work of Philo's, but a forgery by a fifth-century Dominican monk, Annius of Viterbo. For details, see ALM. It's odd that Spinoza should appeal here to the authority of Philo and the consensus in his time, when he generally attaches little weight to authority or consensus. This seems particularly surprising, since he had better and more characteristic arguments available to him, as the preceding note may suggest.

9. In English translations the verse quoted is Prov. 25:1. The text also ascribes its proverbs to Solomon in 1:1 and 10:1. Huet greeted these ascriptions with glee. At last we find a biblical book which says who its author was (*Demonstratio*, 234). Modern scholars regard these passages as later editorial additions, and date the earliest of the proverbs to the period of the divided monarchy, with the final stages of composition and editing occurring in the late Persian or Hellenistic period (HCSB 849). Although tradition is

- pass over in silence the boldness of the Rabbis, who wanted this book, along with Ecclesiastes, excluded from the canon of Sacred books, and wanted to keep it under guard, along with other books we are now lacking.¹⁰ They would simply have done this, if they had not found
10 certain passages which commended the law of Moses. It is surely a cause of grief that sacred and noble matters depended on the choice of these men. All the same, I thank them for having been willing to share these books too with us—though I cannot help doubting whether they have handed them down in good faith.¹¹ But I don't want to subject this to a strict examination here.
- 15 [6] So I proceed to the books of the Prophets.¹² When I pay close attention to these books, I see that the Prophecies in them have been collected from other books, and that they aren't always written down in the same order in which the Prophets themselves spoke or wrote them. Moreover, they don't even contain all the [Prophecies], but only those [the editors] were able to find here and there. So these books are only the fragments of the Prophets.
- 20 [7] For Isaiah began to prophesy in the reign of Uzziah, as the transcriber himself tells us in the first verse. But he not only prophesied at that time, he also recorded all the deeds of this King (see 2 Chronicles 26:22). This book is now lost. What we have, we have shown to have been copied out from the Chronicles of the Kings of
25 Judah and of Israel.¹³ [8] Add to this that the Rabbis maintain that this Prophet prophesied also in the reign of Manasseh, by whom, in the end, he was killed. And although they seem to be relating a legend, still they seem to have believed that not all of his Prophecies were extant.¹⁴

often said to have ascribed Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon to Solomon, the Talmud ascribes all three works to "Hezekiah and his colleagues," that is, to the late eighth or early seventh century (Baba Bathra 15a). Manasseh ascribed them to Solomon.

10. For more on the process of canon selection, see below, §§43–47. On the controversy over the canonicity of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, see Leiman 1976, 72–86. It was objected against both works that their words were self-contradictory, and against Ecclesiastes that its teaching was heretical. One objection to its orthodoxy was that some of its passages seem to deny the immortality of the soul. Cf. Manasseh (1842/1972, II, 312–15) on the *prima facie* conflict between Eccles. 3:19 and 12:7.

11. The conclusion of Ecclesiastes in particular (12:9–14) is widely thought to be a later interpolation. See Seow 1997, 391–96.

12. Spinoza has already discussed six books which the Jewish tradition counted as books of prophecy: the sequence from Joshua through 2 Kings. Spinoza's classification reflects his view that these works are more properly classed with the five books of Moses, as part of an extended historical narrative. Cf. viii, 42.

13. See above, ix, 4.

14. For the tradition of Isaiah's murder by Manasseh, see the Talmud, Yebamoth 49b, Sanhedrin 103b.

[9] Second, the Prophecies of Jeremiah, which are narrated in an historical manner, have been gathered and assembled from various
 30 chroniclers. For not only are they piled up confusedly, without attention to chronological order, but the same story is repeated in different ways. Ch. 21 explains the reason for Jeremiah's imprisonment: when Zedekiah consulted him, he predicted the destruction of the city. Ch. 22 interrupts this story to relate his declamation against Jehoiakin,
 [III/143] who reigned before Zedekiah,¹⁵ and his prediction of the King's captivity. Then ch. 25 describes things revealed to the Prophet before these, in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakim [Jehoiakin's father and predecessor as king]. [In ch. 26] we find things which happened in the first year of this King. [10] And so, without any chronological
 5 order, [the editor] proceeds to pile up Prophecies, until finally ch. 38 returns to what ch. 21 began to narrate, as if these fifteen chapters were spoken parenthetically.¹⁶ For the conjunction with which ch. 38 begins¹⁷ is related to 21:8–10. And then it describes very differently the final imprisonment of Jeremiah and gives a very different reason for his long detention in the guard's court than the reason narrated in
 10 ch. 37. You can see clearly that all these [passages] are collected from different Historians, and that [their disorder] cannot be excused by any other reason.

[11] As for the rest of the Prophecies, contained in the remaining chapters, where Jeremiah speaks in the first person, they seem to have been copied out from the scroll Baruch wrote at Jeremiah's own dicta-
 15 tion. For it's apparent from Jeremiah 36:2 that that scroll contained only the things revealed to this Prophet from Josiah's time down to the fourth year of Jehoiakim, when this book begins. The materials from 45:2 to 51:59 also seem to have been copied out from that scroll.

20 [12] The first verses of Ezekiel indicate very clearly that it too is only a fragment. Who does not see that the conjunction the book begins with¹⁸ is related to other things already said, and connects them with the things to follow? But it's not only the conjunction; the whole

The annotation of Baba Bathra 15a, explaining why the Talmud ascribes the book of Isaiah to Hezekiah and his colleagues, reports that "according to Rashi, Isaiah was executed by Manasseh before he could reduce his own prophecies to writing."

15. Jehoiachin reigned briefly, in the winter of 598–597, after which he was taken into exile in Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar placed his uncle, Zedekiah, on the throne. He reigned for ten years.

16. It would seem that sixteen chapters intervened between Jer. 21 and Jer. 38.

17. A literal translation of the first phrase in Jer. 38 would read: "And he [Shephatiah] heard" (my emphasis). Modern translations often do not make explicit this connection to preceding material.

18. A literal translation of the first phrase in Ezek. 1 would read: "And it was" or "And it came to pass."

context of the statement presupposes other previous writings. [13] For this book begins with a reference to the thirtieth year,¹⁹ which shows
 25 that the Prophet is continuing his narration, not beginning it. The Writer himself also notes this when he adds parenthetically in v. 3, *the word of God often came to Ezekiel, the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans*, etc., as if to say that the words of Ezekiel which he had recorded up to that point were related to other things, which had been revealed to him before this thirtieth year. Further, in his *Antiqui-*
 30 *ties* (X, vii, [2]) Josephus relates that Ezekiel predicted that Zedekiah would not see Babylon, which we do not read in our book—i.e., the book we have.²⁰ On the contrary, one reads there (in 17:[16–21]) that he would be led as a captive to Babylon.^{21**}

[14] Concerning Hosea we cannot say with certainty that he wrote more things than are contained in the book attributed to him. Still, I am amazed that we do not have more writings of his, since the Writer
 [III/144] testifies that he prophesied more than 84 years.²²

19. Probably a reference to Ezekiel's age when he had the vision described in the first chapter (HCSB).

20. In the passage cited from the *Antiquities*, Josephus is concerned about an apparent contradiction between prophecies in Jeremiah (in 32:2–5 and 34:2–5, which say that the king of Babylon will take Zedekiah in captivity to Babylon) and the prophecy in Ezekiel (12:8–13, which says that Zedekiah will be taken in captivity to Babylon, but will not see that city). According to Josephus, Zedekiah took the fact that these prophecies seemed to conflict in one respect as a reason to disbelieve the prophets altogether, even on the matters where they agreed. Later (in X, viii, 2) Josephus points out that the prophecies were not inconsistent: Nebuchadnezzar did capture Zedekiah and take him to Babylon; but he blinded him first. So though Zedekiah was taken to Babylon as a captive, he never saw the city where he was imprisoned (2 Kings 25:7, Jer. 39:7).

Consistently with his contention that our present book of Ezekiel is only a fragment of the prophet's writings, Spinoza seems to hypothesize here that Josephus may have had a different (presumably fuller) text of Ezekiel than we do, since he does not find in Ezekiel a prophecy that Zedekiah would not see Babylon, but only the prophecy of 17:16–21, which just says that Zedekiah will be taken as a captive to Babylon.

Spinoza's hypothesis that Josephus may have had a different text of Ezekiel does not seem necessary to explain why he might have been concerned to remove the apparent contradiction. Josephus does not identify the passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel which are in *prima facie* conflict. Apparently when Spinoza looked for a passage in Ezekiel which predicted Zedekiah's future, he found 17:16–21 (which does not say Zedekiah will not see Babylon), but missed 12:13 (which does).

21. **[ADN. XXII] And so no one could have suspected that [Ezekiel's] prophecy contradicted Jeremiah's prediction—as everyone did from Josephus' account (until they knew from the outcome of the affair that both [prophets] predicted the truth).

22. It's not clear how Spinoza arrives at 84 years as the minimum length of Hosea's prophetic career. But that his career must have lasted for at least several decades does seem to be a fair inference from Hosea 1:1, where the editor declares that Hosea prophesied in the reigns of four kings of Judah, the earliest of whom, Uzziah (or Azariah), is now thought to have reigned c. 783–742 B.C.E. and the last of whom, Hezekiah, is thought to have reigned c. 715–687/6 B.C.E. For the reigns of these kings, see 2 Kings 15–18 and the annotation of those chapters in HCSB.

[15] We can, at least, know this in general: that the Writers of these books did not collect all the prophecies of all the Prophets, nor even all the prophecies of the Prophets we have. For of the Prophets who prophesied during the reign of Manasseh (mentioned generally in 2
 5 Chronicles 33:10, 18 and 19), we have no prophecies at all. Nor do we have all the prophecies of these twelve Prophets.²³ For of Jonah's Prophecies, only those about the Ninevites are recorded, though he also prophesied to the Israelites (see 2 Kings 14:25).

10 [16] Concerning the book of Job, and Job himself, there has been much controversy among the Writers.²⁴ Some people think Moses wrote this book, and that the whole story is only a parable. Some of the Rabbis in the Talmud hand down this view; Maimonides too leans toward it in his *Moreh Nevuchim*. Others have believed the story to be
 15 true. Of these, some thought that this Job lived in the time of Jacob, and that he married Jacob's daughter, Dinah. [17] But as I've already said [vii, 64], Ibn Ezra asserts in his commentaries on this book that it was translated into Hebrew from another language.

I wish he had shown us this more clearly. If he had, we could infer
 20 that the gentiles too had sacred books. [But since he didn't,] I leave the matter in doubt. Nevertheless, I do conjecture that Job was a gentile²⁵ whose heart was very constant, and whose affairs at first prospered, then went very badly, and finally were very fortunate. For Ezekiel 14:14 names him among others [as a righteous man]. [18] And I believe that the changes in Job's fortunes, and the constancy of his heart, gave many
 25 people an occasion for arguing about God's providence—or at least gave the author of this book an occasion to compose this Dialogue. For the things in it, as well as the style, seem to be, not those of a man suffering among the ashes, but those of a man reflecting at leisure in his study.²⁶ And here I would believe, along with Ibn Ezra, that this book really was translated from another language, because [the author] seems
 30 to aspire to the poetic art of the Gentiles. For twice the Father of the Gods calls a council, and Momus (here called Satan) criticizes God's dictates with the greatest freedom, etc. But these are only conjectures, and are not sufficiently firm.

23. The twelve "minor" prophets, whose writings were so short that originally they were all contained on one scroll. This series of prophets, beginning with Hosea and ending with Malachi, concludes the section of the Hebrew Bible devoted to the prophets.

24. For the Talmud, see Baba Bathra 14b–16b; for Maimonides, see his *Guide* III, 22. Spinoza mentioned the controversy over Job's historicity earlier, in ii, 55. For a modern discussion of issues about the dating of Job, see Pope's introduction to *Anchor Job*.

25. Kugel discusses reasons for holding that Job was a gentile in Kugel 2007, ch. 34.

26. Spinoza's comment on the style of Job echoes Hobbes' observation in *Leviathan* xxxiii, 12.

[19] I pass to the book of Daniel. From ch. 8 on, this book no doubt contains Daniel's own writings. But where the first seven chapters were [III/145] copied from, I don't know. Except for the first, they were written in Chaldean.²⁷ So we can suspect that they were taken from the Chronicles of the Chaldeans. [20] If this were clearly established, it would be most splendid evidence to persuade us that Scripture is sacred only insofar as by Scripture we mean the things signified in Scripture, not insofar as we mean by Scripture the words, *or* the language and utterances, by which things are signified. It would show, further, that the books teaching and relating excellent things are equally sacred, whatever language they were finally written in, and whatever nation wrote them. [21] Nevertheless, we can at least note this: these chapters were written in Chaldean and, notwithstanding that, are as sacred as the rest of the Bible.

10 The first book of Ezra²⁸ is so connected to this book of Daniel that it is easy to see that the Writer is the same person, who is continuing to relate the affairs of the Jews in sequence, from the first part of the captivity.²⁹

[22] And I don't doubt that the Book of Esther is connected with the first book of Ezra. For the conjunction with which this book begins³⁰ can't be related to any other book. Furthermore, it is not credible that 15 Esther is the book Mordecai wrote.³¹ For in 9:20–22 another person relates, concerning Mordecai, that he wrote Letters, and what they contained. Moreover, in 9:31[–32], [the narrator relates] that queen

27. "Chaldean" is one of the terms Spinoza uses to refer to the language now generally referred to as Aramaic, which is the language used in Daniel from 2:4b to the end of ch. 7. The rest of Daniel is in Hebrew. Cf. viii, 25–26. Spinoza also refers to Aramaic as Syriac in ADN. XXVI (at xi, 3).

28. I.e., the book now known simply as Ezra. The book now usually called Nehemiah was called 2 Ezra in the Latin Vulgate. The prevailing view among modern scholars is that the Ezra-Nehemiah sequence was written as a continuation of 1 and 2 Chronicles, by an author whose style and interests were very similar to those of the author of Chronicles (though he was not the author of Chronicles). Both authors are thought to have been Jerusalem clergy of the fourth century BCE (HCSB, 646). Although much of the material in the first six chapters of Daniel is also thought to come from the fourth century, some portions of the last six chapters are now dated to the early second century (HCSB, 1168).

29. Daniel begins by relating events supposed to have happened to young Jewish members of the royal family and nobility during the first years of the Babylonian captivity (c. 597–590). Later chapters pass to events supposed to have happened during the reign of Darius I (or Darius the Great, 522–486), the Persian emperor said in Ezra 6 to have authorized the rebuilding of the temple (c. 520). Ezra begins by describing the return of the exiles to Jerusalem (c. 538) and concludes with Artaxerxes commissioning Ezra to establish pentateuchal law as state law in Judea. The Artaxerxes in question is apparently Artaxerxes I, who reigned from 465 to 424. Like Daniel, Ezra also contains a substantial portion written in Aramaic.

30. A literal translation of the first phrase of Esther would read: "*And it was*" or: "*And it came to pass.*"

31. As Rashi (1960) held, on the basis of Esther 9:20.

Esther established by edict matters pertaining to the festival of Lots (Purim), and that this was written in a book. It sounds in the Hebrew
 20 as though this was a book known to everyone at that time—viz. the time in which the things [in the book of Esther] were written. And Ibn Ezra confesses, as everyone is bound to confess, that this [book] perished with the others. Finally, [in 10:2] the Historian sends us to the Chronicles of the Kings of Persia for the rest of Mordecai's story.

[23] There is thus no doubt that the same Historian who related the affairs of Daniel and Ezra also wrote this book, as well as the book of
 25 Nehemiah^{32*} (called the second book of Ezra). So we maintain that one and the same Historian wrote these four books: Daniel, Ezra, Esther and Nehemiah. But who he was, I cannot even conjecture.

[24] How did this person, whoever he was, acquire knowledge of
 30 these accounts, and perhaps also copy down most of them? Like the Kings in the first temple, the governors, *or* princes, of the Jews in the second temple had scribes *or* historiographers who wrote annals, *or* their Chronicles, in sequence. The Chronicles of the Kings, *or* their annals, are cited throughout the books of Kings. Those of the Princes
 [III/146] and priests of the second temple are first cited in Nehemiah 12:23, and next in 1 Maccabees 16:24. [25] No doubt this is the book we just spoke about (see Esther 9:31[–32]), which gave accounts of Esther's edict and Mordecai's deeds, and which (with Ibn Ezra) we have said perished. It
 5 seems, then, that all the things contained in these [four books] have been selected or copied out from this book. For the Writer of these books does not cite any other book, and we do not know any other book whose authority is generally recognized.

[26] That neither Ezra nor Nehemiah wrote these books is evident from the fact that Nehemiah 12:10–11 traces the descendants of the
 10 high priest, Jeshua, down to Jaddua, the sixth high priest, who went out to meet Alexander the Great when he had nearly subjugated the Persian empire^{33*} (or as Philo Judaeus says in the book of times,³⁴ the sixth and last priest under the Persians). [27] Indeed, Nehemiah 12:22 indicates

32. **[ADN. XXIII] The historian himself testifies in 1:1 that most of this book is taken from one Nehemiah himself wrote. But no doubt the historian, who lived after Nehemiah, added the things related from 8[:1]–12:26, as well as the last two verses of ch. 12, which are inserted parenthetically in the words of Nehemiah. [Nearly all of the first seven chapters of Nehemiah are written in the first person, and look as though they may have been taken from Nehemiah's own account of what he did. Most of the next six chapters are written in the third person, though there are two stretches of text (from 12:27–43 and from 13:4–31) where the editor seems to have inserted passages from Nehemiah's memoirs (HCSB, 647).]

33. *See Josephus, *Antiquities* XI, viii. [A reference Spinoza gives in the text is here made a note.]

34. On this work, wrongly attributed to Philo, see above, n. 8 in x, 3.

this clearly: *In the time of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan and Jaddua*, says the Historian, *the Levites were recorded on*^{35*} *the reign of Darius the Persian*, i.e., in the Chronicles. I believe no one will think that either Ezra^{36**} or Nehemiah was so long-lived that they survived fourteen Kings of Persia. For Cyrus was the first to give the Jews permission to rebuild the temple, and from his time until that of Darius, the fourteenth and last of the Persian Kings, we count more than 230 years.³⁷

[28] So I do not doubt that these books [Daniel, Ezra, Esther and Nehemiah] were written long after Judas Maccabee restored worship in the temple,³⁸ because at that time the false books of Daniel, Ezra and Esther³⁹ were circulated by certain malevolent people who no doubt belonged to the Sect of the Sadducees. For so far as I know, the Pharisees never accepted those books. And although we find in the book called 4 Ezra certain tales which we also read in the Talmud, that is still no reason to attribute them to the Pharisees. If you discount the most foolish of them, there is none of them who does not believe

35. *Unless על [the word translated *on* in the text] means *beyond*, there has been a copyist's error, which has put על, *on*, in place of עד, *until*. [The use of the preposition על has puzzled other readers besides Spinoza. Albright suggested reading בלע, *from*, and Myers follows him. See Myers Ezra-Nehemiah, pp. 194–95, 198–99, and below, n. 36.]

36. **[ADN. XXIV] Ezra was the uncle of the first high priest, Jeshua (see Ezra 7:1 and 1 Chronicles 6:13–15). Together with Zerubbabel he set out from Babylon to Jerusalem (see Nehemiah 12:1). But it seems that when he saw that the affairs of the Jews were in disarray, he returned to Babylon. Others also did this, as is evident from Nehemiah 1:2. He stayed there until the reign of Artaxerxes when, having obtained what he wanted, he set out for Jerusalem a second time. Nehemiah also left for Jerusalem with Zerubbabel in the time of Cyrus. See Ezra 2:2 and 63, and compare with Nehemiah 10:1 and 9. For the interpreters who render הַרְשָׁבָטָה *batirshata* as *governor* do not prove this by any example, whereas it is certain that new names were given to the Jews who had to frequent the court. So Daniel was called Belteshazzar, Zerubbabel was called Sheshbazzar (see Daniel 1:7, Ezra 1:8 and 5:14), and Nehemiah was called Hatirshata. But by reason of his office he used to be called נָחָה, *administrator or governor*. See Nehemiah 5:14 and 12:26. [The Artaxerxes referred to in the fifth sentence is probably Artaxerxes I, who reigned from 465 to 424 B.C.E. Spinoza is apparently unclear about his dates, since he places Ezra and Nehemiah in the sixth century. There is much disagreement in the manuscripts about the scriptural references given in the seventh sentence. I follow Akkerman and Totaro.]

37. The Cyrus referred to here is Cyrus II (or Cyrus the Great), who reigned c. 550–530. Spinoza, following the chronology in Pereira's *Commentariorum in Danielem* (Gebhardt V, 71), takes "Darius the Persian" to be Darius III, who reigned from 336 to 330. On the Albright-Myers reading (mentioned above in n. 35), "Darius the Persian" will be Darius I, who reigned from 521 to 486. The reference to Jaddua, however, will still entail that (at least this passage in) Nehemiah was written no earlier than the time of Alexander. Though Totaro does not consider Albright's emendation, her annotation of this passage is still helpful.

38. For the modern view of the dating of these works, see above, n. 28, at x, 21.

39. Spinoza refers here to the additions to the books of Daniel and Esther, and to the book now most commonly known as 4 Ezra (a portion of 2 Esdras). For discussion of these works, see the section on Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books in HCSB.

30 that those legends were added by some trifler.⁴⁰ I also believe that some [Sadducees] did this to make the traditions [of the Pharisees] laughable to everyone. [29] Or if you prefer, perhaps [those books] were copied out and published at that time to show the people that the Prophecies of Daniel were fulfilled and in this way to strengthen them in religion, [III/147] so that in such great calamities they would not despair of having better times and of their future salvation.

[30] But though these books⁴¹ are so much later and more recent, many errors have crept into them. If I'm not mistaken, this happened because they were copied out hastily. For in these books, as in the others, we find marginal notes of the kind we treated in the last Chapter, but more of them than in the others. Moreover, there are also certain passages which cannot be explained in any other way, as I shall shortly show.

First, though, I want to note this regarding the marginal readings of these books: even if we must grant the Pharisees that these readings go back to those who wrote the books themselves,⁴² then we must say 10 that the Writers (if, by chance, there was more than one) made a note of these readings because they found that the Chronicles they were transcribing were not written accurately enough, and that, though certain errors were clear, they still did not dare to correct the writings of the ancients and of their predecessors. There is no need now for me to treat these matters more fully here again.

15 [31] So I proceed to point out things not noted in the margin. First, I don't know how many errors have crept into Ezra 2. For in v. 64 the total of all those who have been numbered in the various families is given as 42,360. Nevertheless, if you add the subtotals for each family, you will not find more than 29,818. Something is wrong here, either 20 in the total or in the subtotals.⁴³ But it seems we ought to believe that it is the overall total which is given correctly. No doubt everyone had an accurate recall of something so memorable, whereas the subtotals are not so memorable. If an error were to slip into the overall total, it would immediately be evident to everyone, and would easily be corrected.

40. Gebhardt (V, 71) notes that although Manasseh ben Israel acknowledged that 4 Ezra was apocryphal, he thought it constituted evidence that the American Indians were descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. His taking this work seriously thus would make him among the most foolish of the Pharisees.

41. I.e., the canonical Daniel, Ezra, Esther, and Nehemiah.

42. As maintained in the Talmud, Nedarim 37b-38a (Gebhardt V, 71).

43. Cf. Manasseh, 1842/1972, II, 327-28, who adopts a solution advocated as early as *Seder Olam* (2005, 247). Myers comments that "various attempts have been made to interpret the discrepancies, but none is quite satisfactory" (Anchor Ezra-Nehemiah, 20-21).

- 25 [32] There is complete confirmation of this in Nehemiah 7, where this chapter of Ezra (called the letter on genealogy) is copied out (as is expressly said in v. 5), the overall total [given in Nehemiah 7:66] agrees completely with that of the book of Ezra, whereas the subtotals differ greatly. You will find that some subtotals are larger, and others smaller, than they are in Ezra.⁴⁴ Together they all add up to 31,089.
- 30 So no doubt many errors have crept into both the book of Ezra and that of Nehemiah, but only in the subtotals.

[33] As for the commentators who try to reconcile these evident contradictions, each one invents what he can, according to the power of his mentality. In the meantime, while they worship the letters and words of Scripture, the only effect of their actions, as we already warned [III/148] above [III/134/25–135/1], is to expose the Writers of the Bible to contempt, so that they seem not to know how to speak, or how to order the things they have to say. All they do is obscure completely what is clear in Scripture. If it were permissible to interpret Scripture everywhere in their way, there would be absolutely no utterance whose true meaning we could not doubt.

- [34] But there's no reason to go on at length about these matters. I'm convinced that if some Historian wanted to imitate everything they, in their devotion, permit the Writers of the Bible to do, they would ridicule him on many grounds. If they think it blasphemous to say that Scripture is faulty somewhere, tell me what I should say about people who ascribe to Scripture whatever invention they please? or who so dishonor the Sacred Historians that they are believed to babble and to confuse everything? or who deny the clear and most evident meanings of Scripture? [35] For what is clearer in Scripture than that in the Letter on Genealogy copied out in ch. 2 of the book attributed to him, Ezra (with his colleagues)⁴⁵ included in his enumeration of the families all those who set out for Jerusalem? Among them he gives both the number of those who could show their Genealogy, and the number of those who could not [Ezra 2:59–63].

44. Cf. Ezra 2:5 with Neh. 7:10 or Ezra 2:35 with Neh. 7:38. These are among the inconsistencies discussed by Manasseh (1842/1972, II, 328–29), who accepted Ibn Ezra's explanation of the discrepancies, viz. that Nehemiah's list represents a new count made some years later, by which time the numbers had changed. Though Spinoza does not mention this explanation, a number of the points he makes count against it: that the overall total is the same in each account, that some of the individual figures are larger and some smaller in the supposedly later list, and that Neh. 7:5 gives the impression of an intention to reproduce Ezra's account.

45. Tötaro suggests that Spinoza is probably referring here to the colleagues who are said in Neh. 8:4 to have stood on the platform with Ezra when he read the book of the law to the people.

What is clearer from Nehemiah 7:5, I ask, than that Nehemiah simply
 20 copied out this Letter?

[36] So those who explain these passages differently are only denying the true meaning of Scripture, and consequently, denying Scripture itself. As for their thinking it pious to accommodate some passages of Scripture to others,⁴⁶ it is a ridiculous piety to accommodate the clear passages to the obscure, the correct to the faulty, and to corrupt the
 25 sound passages with the rotten. Still, I won't call them blasphemers; they don't intend any evil. To err is indeed human.⁴⁷

But I return to my point. [37] In addition to the errors which must be conceded to exist in the sums of the Letter on Genealogy, both in Ezra and in Nehemiah, there are many also in the names of
 30 the families, still more in the Genealogies, in the histories and, I'm afraid, even in the Prophecies themselves. For certainly the Prophecy of Jeremiah 22 concerning Jeconiah does not seem to agree at all with his history. Compare particularly the words of the last verse of that chapter with the end of 2 Kings, and of Jeremiah, and 1 Chronicles 3:17–19.⁴⁸

[III/149] [38] Nor do I see how he could say of Zedekiah, whose eyes were gouged out as soon as he had seen his sons put to death [2 Kings 25:7], *you will die in peace etc.* (see Jeremiah 34:5).⁴⁹ If Prophecies are to be interpreted according to the outcome, these names would have to be changed and it would seem that for Zedekiah we should read Jeconiah, and conversely. But this would be too great a paradox; and so I prefer to
 5 leave the matter as one which cannot be perceived—especially because, if there's some error here, it must be attributed to the Historian, not to a defect in the copies.

[39] As for the other errors I've mentioned, I don't think it worthwhile to identify them here. I couldn't do that without wearying the

46. Appuhn and others have suggested that we have here a clear allusion to Manasseh ben Israel's *Conciliator*. But seeking such reconciliations was standard procedure for medieval commentators.

47. Another allusion to the line from Terence previously quoted in the final paragraph of the Preface (where Spinoza had applied it to himself).

48. Jer. 22:24–30 prophesies a harsh fate for Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) in Babylon. Verse 22:30 says he will be childless, and that none of his offspring will sit on the throne of David. But 2 Kings 25:27–30 reports that in the thirty-seventh year of his captivity, when Evil-merodach succeeded Nebuchadnezzar, the new king released Jeconiah from prison and treated him kindly. (The closing verses of Jeremiah repeat the closing verses of 2 Kings.) 1 Chron. 3:17–19 reports that he had seven children, and lists as one of his grandchildren Zerubbabel, whom Cyrus appointed to rule in Jerusalem when the Israelites were released from captivity. Cf. ADN. XXI, at III/141.

49. The problem of reconciling this prophecy with history is discussed in the Talmud, Moed Katan 28b, where it is argued that because Zedekiah survived Nebuchadnezzar, he had the satisfaction of outliving the man who had caused his eyes to be gouged out.

reader—and others have already noted them. [40] Because of the very
 10 manifest contradictions Rabbi Schlomoh⁵⁰ observed in the genealogies
 related, he was forced to burst out in these words:

*That Ezra (who he thinks wrote the books of Chronicles) calls the sons
 of Benjamin by different names, treats his genealogy differently than we have
 15 it in the book of Genesis, and finally, indicates most of the cities of the Levites
 differently than Josbua did, results from the fact that he found the originals
 inconsistent.*^{51*}

and a bit further on:

*That the Genealogy of Gibeon and of others is described twice and differently
 comes from his having found several different Letters giving each Genealogy,
 and in copying them out he followed the greatest number of copies; but when
 20 the number of inconsistent copies was equal, then he copied both of them.*

[41] So saying, he grants, without reservation, that these books were
 copied out from originals which were neither correct enough nor certain
 enough. Indeed, this is what usually happens: when the commentators
 devote themselves to reconciling passages, they don't do anything more
 than indicate the causes of the errors. I don't think anyone of sound
 25 judgment believes that the Sacred Historians deliberately wanted to
 write so that they would seem to contradict one another throughout.

[42] But perhaps someone will say that in this way I overthrow
 Scripture completely—for in this way everyone can suspect that it is
 faulty everywhere. But that would be wrong. I have shown that in this
 way I am consulting the interests of Scripture, to prevent the clear and
 30 uncontaminated passages from being accommodated to, and corrupted
 by, the faulty ones. The fact that some passages are corrupt does not
 license suspicion of them all. No book has ever been free of error. Has
 anyone ever, for this reason, suspected faults everywhere? Of course
 not, especially when the statement is clear, and we see plainly what the
 author's intention is.

[43] With this I have finished the things I wanted to mention about
 [III/150] the history of the Books of the Old Testament. From them we readily
 infer that before the time of the Maccabees there was no canon of the
 Sacred Books,^{52**} but that the ones we now have were selected from

50. Rabbi Shlomoh ben Yitzchak (1040–1105), the French commentator better known as Rashi, perhaps the most highly esteemed of the medieval Jewish commentators.

51. *See his commentary on 1 Chronicles 8. [A reference Spinoza gives in the text is here made a note. ALM note that the commentary on Chronicles in Buxtorf's edition is no longer attributed to Rashi.]

52. **[ADN. XXV] The so-called great Synagogue did not begin until after Asia was conquered by the Macedonians. Moreover, what Maimonides, R. Abraham ben David and

many others by the Pharisees of the second temple, who also instituted the formulas for prayers, and that these books were accepted only because of their decision.⁵³ [44] So those who want to demonstrate the authority of Holy Scripture are bound to show the authority of each book; proving the divinity of one is not enough to establish the divinity of all. Otherwise we would have to maintain that the council of Pharisees could not have erred in this choice of books, something no one will ever demonstrate.

[45] The reason which compels me to maintain that only the Pharisees chose the books of the Old Testament and placed them in the canon of Sacred texts is that Daniel 12:2 predicts the resurrection of the dead, which the Sadducees denied. The Pharisees themselves reveal this clearly in the Talmud. For in the Treatise on the Sabbath, II, 30b, it is said

אמר רבי יהודה משימה דרב בקשו חכמים לגנוז ספר קהלת מפני שדבריו סותרין דברי תורה ומפני מה לא גנוזוהו מפני שתחילו דברי תורה וסופו דברי תורה *R. Jēbuda said in Rav's name that the wise men tried to hide the book of Ecclesiastes because its words were contrary to the words of the law* (NB: to the book of the law of Moses) *But why did they not hide it? because it began according to the law and ended according to the law.*⁵⁴

others maintain—that those who presided at this council were Ezra, Daniel, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, etc.—is a ridiculous invention. Its only basis is a rabbinic tradition which teaches that the reign of the Persians lasted 34 years, not more. They do not have any other argument to prove that the decisions of that great Synagogue, or Synod, held only by the Pharisees, were received from the Prophets, who received them from other Prophets, and so on back to Moses, who had received them from God himself, and handed them down to posterity orally, not in writing. Although the Pharisees may, with their usual stubbornness, believe these things, the wise, who know what causes Councils and Synods, and are familiar with the controversies of the Pharisees and Sadducees, have easily been able to guess why that great Synagogue or Council was convened. This is certain: that no Prophets were present at that council, and that the decisions of the Pharisees, which they call traditions, received their authority from the same Council. [On the history of the idea of a “Great Synagogue” in the Jewish tradition, see Daniel Sperber, “The Great Synagogue,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 19:383–85. The figure of 34 years for the period of Persian rule (which in fact lasted some 200 years) goes back to *Seder Olam*. See Stanley Isser, “Chronology,” *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 4 (2007): 704–7.]

53. Gebhardt (V, 73) notes that Uriel da Costa had also raised the issue of the Pharisees’ role in deciding on the canon, and had in particular questioned the provenance of Daniel. See Gebhardt 1922, 51–52, 59–60.

54. Spinoza returns to an issue first discussed in x, 5. Gebhardt pointed out (V, 73–74) that Spinoza misquotes the Talmud here. The passage should read: “The Sages wished to hide the Book of Ecclesiastes, because its words are self-contradictory; yet why did they not hide it? Because its beginning is religious teaching [Torah] and its end is religious teaching [Torah].” So what the Talmud makes a charge of internal inconsistency in Ecclesiastes Spinoza makes a charge of inconsistency between Ecclesiastes and the Torah. Gebhardt thinks this was a failure of memory. ALM suggest that Spinoza has confused the passage concerning Ecclesiastes with the one concerning Ezekiel cited

[46] And a bit further on:

ואף ספר משלי בקשו לגנוז *and they also tried to hide the book of Proverbs etc.*

And finally, in the Treatise on the Sabbath I, 13b:

ברם זכור אותו האיש לטוב נחניה בן חזקיה שמו שאלמלא הוא נגנו ספר יחזקאל שהיו
25 דבריו סותרין דברי תורה *call him a man, surely, because of his beneficence, he who is called Negbunja, son of Hezekiah; for if it had not been for him, the book of Ezekiel would have been hidden, because its words are contrary to the words of the law.*⁵⁵

[47] From these passages it follows clearly that those who were learned in the law summoned a council to determine which books were to be received as sacred and which were to be excluded. So whoever wants to
30 be certain of the authority of all the books should call a council again and require a reason for each one.

[48] Now it would be time to examine the books of the New Testament in the same way. But because I hear that this has been done by men who are most learned both in the sciences and especially in the languages,⁵⁶ because I do not have such an exact knowledge of the Greek language that I might dare to undertake this task,⁵⁷ and finally, because we lack the original texts of the books written in the Hebrew
[III/151] language⁵⁸ I prefer to refrain from this difficult business. Nevertheless, I consider that in what follows I indicate the things which contribute most to my plan.

immediately below. Leiman (1976, 175, n. 322) points out that elsewhere the rabbinic literature indicates other grounds for the withdrawal of Ecclesiastes. Specifically, *Leviticus Rabbah* says that “The Sages wished to withdraw Ecclesiastes because they found in it matters which smacked of heresy” (28:1).

55. Spinoza discussed this passage previously in ii, 49, where he identified Ezekiel’s contradiction of the law as his denial (18:19–20) that God will punish the son for the transgressions of his father. The annotation of this passage in ALM is helpful.

56. Since Spinoza’s method of interpretation—his demand for a “history of scripture” in the sense defined above in vii, 14–23—is apparently original with him, it seems doubtful that any previous writer would have done the necessary work on the NT in the way he would think it should have been done.

57. ALM point out that Spinoza generally quotes Greek texts (the NT, Josephus, pseudo-Philo) in a Latin or Aramaic translation, and that except in ADN. XXVI he does not give any citations in Greek. It does, however, appear from ADN. XXI that he is able to consult the Septuagint when there is a question about the Hebrew text. Gebhardt notes that in addition to several works he possessed which gave the Greek text along with a Latin translation, he also had some which gave only the Greek text (e.g., Epictetus, Lucian, and Homer), a Greek grammar and two Greek dictionaries.

58. At vii, 64, Spinoza identified the gospel of Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews as having been written originally in Hebrew. But it appears from ADN. XXVI, at xi, 3, that Spinoza in fact thought the original language of much, if not all, of the New Testament was what we would now call Aramaic. See the Editorial Preface to the TTP, p. 64.

CHAPTER XI

*Whether the Apostles wrote their Letters
as Apostles and Prophets, or as Teachers.
On the function of the Apostles¹*

[1] No one who has read the New Testament can doubt that the Apostles were Prophets. But the Prophets did not always speak from
10 a revelation. On the contrary, they did that very rarely (as we showed at the end of Chapter 1). So we can raise the question: whether the Apostles wrote their Letters as Prophets—from a revelation and by an express command (as Moses, Jeremiah and the other Prophets did)—or whether they wrote them as private persons, or teachers. This question
15 arises particularly because in 1 Corinthians 14:6 Paul indicates two kinds of preaching, one from revelation, the other from knowledge.² That's why, I say, we must wonder whether the Apostles prophesy or teach in their Letters.

[2] If we're willing to attend to the Apostles' style, we'll find it most unlike that of Prophecy. The most common practice of the Prophets was to testify everywhere that they were speaking according to God's
20 edict: *thus says God, the God of hosts says, God's edict etc.* And this seems to have held good not only when the Prophets spoke in public assemblies, but also in the Letters containing revelations. This is evident from the Letter Elijah wrote to Jehoram (see 2 Chronicles 21:12), which also begins *יהוה אומר*, *thus says God*.

25 [3] In the Letters of the Apostles, on the other hand, we read nothing like this. On the contrary, in 1 Corinthians 7:40 Paul speaks according to his own opinion.³ Indeed, in a great many passages there occur ways of speaking characteristic of a mind undecided and perplexed, as (in Romans 3:28) *we think, therefore, [that a person is justified by faith apart from works prescribed by the law]* and (in

1. ALM note that in this chapter Spinoza generally relies on Tremellius's Latin translation of the Aramaic version of the New Testament. (There are some exceptions.) On Tremellius, see the Editorial Preface, p. 64, the title page, p. 65, n. 1, and ADN. XXVI.

2. 1 Cor. 14:6 reads: "Now brothers and sisters, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you in some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching?"

3. Speaking of the right of a widow to remarry, Paul says that although she is free to do so, "in my judgment she is more blessed if she remains as she is" (NRSV).

Romans 8:18) *for I think*,^{4**} [that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us] and many
 30 other passages in this manner. In addition to these, we find other ways of speaking completely removed from Prophetic authority, e.g.,
but I say this as one without authority, not as a command (see 1 Corin-
 [III/152] thians 7:6),⁵ *I give advice as a man, who, by God's grace, is trustworthy*
 (see 1 Corinthians 7:25),⁶ and similarly, many other passages. And it should be noted that when he says in the chapter cited that he has or does not have God's precept or command, he does not mean a precept or command revealed to him by God, but only the teachings Christ imparted to his disciples on the mount.

5 [4] Moreover, if we attend also to the way the Apostles hand down the Gospel teaching in these Letters, we shall see that it differs greatly from the way of the Prophets. For the Apostles are always reasoning, with the result that they seem to debate, not to prophesy. Prophecies, on the other hand, contain only bare authoritative judgments and
 10 decrees, because in them God is introduced as speaking, and he does not reason, but decides in accordance with the absolute sovereignty of his nature, and also because the authority of the Prophet is not subject to reasoning. For whoever would confirm his authoritative judgments by reason thereby submits them to the discretionary judgment of anyone.

4. **[ADN. XXVI] The interpreters of this passage [Rom. 8:18] translate *logizomai* as *concludo*, *I conclude*, and contend that Paul uses it instead of *sullogizomai* [I conclude] whereas *logizomai* in Greek means the same as חשב in Hebrew, *to calculate, to think, to judge*, in which meaning it agrees best with the Syriac text. For the Syriac translation—if indeed it is a translation, which is doubtful, since we don't know the translator, or when [this text] was circulated, and the native language of the Apostles was Syriac—renders this text of Paul thus: *metbrabgenan bachil*, which Tremellius translates very well: *we think, therefore*. For the noun formed from this verb, *rebgjono*, signifies *judgment*; for *rebgjono* in Hebrew is רעותא, *will*; therefore, *metbrabgenan* is *we will* or *we judge*. [The editions attach this note to the quote from Rom. 3:28, but since the verb there is plural, whereas that in Rom. 8:18 is singular, attaching it to the latter quote probably accords better with Spinoza's intention. The Adnotation uses Syriac script for the Syriac words Spinoza uses. I give only the transliteration provided in Gebhardt and Totaro. Spinoza is apparently wrong in thinking that the Syriac version gives the original of the NT. It is now thought to be a 5th Century translation of the Greek text. See Metzger and Ehrman, pp. 98–99. For more on this, see the Editorial Preface, pp. 64–65.]

5. The NRSV renders this text: "This I say by way of concession, not command." (Paul is recommending that married couples not deprive one another of their conjugal rights.) As ALM note, Spinoza seems to have misread Tremellius's translation, which has *infirmis* (suggesting weakness on the part of the Corinthians to whom the recommendation is given) where Spinoza has *infirmus* (implying a lack of authority on Paul's part).

6. A fuller quotation, in the NRSV, reads: "Now concerning virgins, I have no command of the Lord, but I give my opinion as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy." (Paul thinks virgins would do best to remain as they are, but that they do not sin if they marry.) Gebhardt and Van Vloten-Land wrongly follow the first edition here, reading: *quia Dei gratia*. ALM correct to: *qui a Dei gratia*.

This Paul seems to have done, because he reasons, saying (1 Corinthians 10:15) *I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say*. Finally, [prophecies contain only bare authoritative judgments and decisions] because the Prophets did not perceive the things revealed to them by the power of the natural light. That is, they did not perceive them by reasoning, as we showed in Ch. 1.

[5] In the Pentateuch some conclusions seem to be drawn by inference. But anyone who pays attention will see that they cannot in any way be taken as decisive arguments. When Moses said to the Israelites (Deuteronomy 31:27) *if you have been rebels against God while I lived with you, you will be much more rebellious after I am dead*, he wasn't trying to convince them by reason that after his death they would necessarily turn aside from the true worship of God. For that argument would be mistaken, as we could also show from Scripture. The Israelites persevered steadfastly during the lives of Joshua and the Elders,⁷ and afterward also during the lives of Samuel, David, Solomon, etc.

[6] So those words of Moses are only a figurative expression, in which he predicts the future defection of the people rhetorically, as he was able to imagine it more vividly. Why don't I say that Moses spoke these things on his own authority, to make his prediction probable to the people, and not as a prophet, in accordance with a revelation? Because Deuteronomy 31:21 relates that God revealed this very thing to Moses in other words. It was certainly not necessary to render Moses more certain of this prediction and decree of God by probable reasons. But it was necessary that it be represented vividly in his imagination, as we have shown in Ch. 1. There was no way this could be better done than by imagining the present stubbornness of the people, which he had often experienced, as future.

[7] This is the way we must understand all the arguments we find Moses using in the Pentateuch. They're not taken from the storehouse of reason, but are only ways of speaking he used to express God's decrees more effectively and imagine them vividly. Nevertheless, I don't wish to deny absolutely that the Prophets were able to argue from revelation. I only say this: that the more the Prophets argue in due form, the more the knowledge they have of the matter revealed approaches natural knowledge; that their possession of supernatural knowledge is best seen from the fact that they speak simple authoritative judgments, whether decrees, or statements; and thus that the greatest of the Prophets, Moses, did not make any argument in due form. On the other hand, I grant that Paul's long deductions and arguments, as we

7. That is, the Judges who ruled Israel after the death of Joshua.

find them in his Letter to the Romans, were not in any way written from a supernatural revelation.

[8] So the ways the Apostles both spoke and discussed things in their Letters indicate most clearly that they did not write them from
 20 revelation and a divine command, but only from their natural judgment. They contain nothing but brotherly advice, mixed with a politeness which Prophetic authority is completely opposed to—as when Paul excuses himself in Romans 15, v. 15: *I have written a bit more boldly to you, brothers.*

25 We can also infer this from the fact that we do not read anywhere that the Apostles were commanded to write, but only to preach wherever they went and to confirm what they said by signs. For their presence and signs were absolutely required for converting the nations to religion and strengthening them in it, as Paul himself explicitly indicates
 30 in Romans 1, v. 11: *because I long to see you, so that I may impart to you the gift of the Spirit, that you may be strengthened.*

[9] But here someone may object that the same reasoning could equally justify the conclusion that the Apostles did not even preach as Prophets. For when they went about preaching, they didn't do this by an express command, as the Prophets used to. When we read in the Old Testament that Jonah went to Nineveh to preach, we read at the
 [III/154] same time that he was explicitly sent there, and that it was revealed to him what he had to preach there. Similarly, we're told in detail that Moses set out for Egypt as God's representative, and told at the same time what he was required to say to the people of Israel and to King Pharaoh, and what signs he was to perform in their presence, in
 5 order to win their trust. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were expressly ordered to preach to the Israelites. And finally, the Prophets preached nothing which Scripture does not testify that they received from God.

[10] But we don't read anything like this in the New Testament, when the Apostles went about preaching. Or if we do, it's very rare.⁸ On
 10 the other hand, we find some passages which indicate explicitly that the Apostles chose places for preaching according to their own plan. This is illustrated by that well-known disagreement between Paul and Barnabas, which ended in their parting (see Acts 15:37–[40]). Often they also tried in vain to go somewhere, as that same Paul witnesses in Romans 1, v.13: *I have wanted to come to you these many times, but I*
 15 *was prevented*, and Romans 15, v. 22: *because of this I have been hindered many times from coming to you.* And finally, 1 Corinthians 16, v. 12: *as*

8. There's an example in Acts 16:9 (ALM).

for my brother; Apollos, I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers, but he was not at all willing; however, when he has the opportunity etc.

20 [11] So [the objection continues] from all these things – their ways of speaking, the dispute between the Apostles, and the fact that when they went somewhere to preach, Scripture does not testify (as it does concerning the Prophets of old) that they did so from a command of God—I ought to have concluded that the Apostles preached as teachers, and not as Prophets.

25 But we'll settle this question easily if we attend to the difference between the calling of the Apostles and that of the Old Testament Prophets. The latter were not called to preach and prophesy to all nations, but only to certain particular ones. For this they required an explicit and special command for each nation. But the Apostles were
30 called to preach to absolutely everyone and to convert everyone to religion. So wherever they went, they were carrying out Christ's command and there was no need for them to have the things they were to preach revealed to them before they went—not those disciples of Christ to whom he himself had said: *but when they hand you over, do not be anxious about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what*
[III/155] *you shall say will be given to you in that hour etc.* See Matthew 10:19–20.

[12] We conclude, then, that the Apostles had from a special revelation only the things they preached orally, and at the same time confirmed with signs (see what we've shown at the beginning of Chapter 2 [§4]). But what they taught simply, without using any signs as witnesses,
5 whether in writing or orally, they spoke or wrote from knowledge (i.e., natural knowledge). On this see 1 Corinthians 14:6.

It's no objection to this that all the Letters begin with an affirmation of [the writer's] status as an Apostle.⁹ For as I shall soon show, the Apostles were granted not only the power to prophesy, but also the
10 authority to teach. [13] For this reason we grant that they wrote their Letters as Apostles, and that this was the reason each one began with an affirmation of his being an Apostle. Or perhaps—to reconcile the reader's heart to them more easily and to get the reader's attention—they wanted above all to testify that they were the ones who had become
15 known to all the faithful by their preaching and who had then shown by clear testimonies that they taught the true religion and the way to salvation. For whatever discussion I see in these Letters concerning the

9. Not quite true. The letters traditionally ascribed to Paul standardly begin with some such formula as *Paul, a servant of Christ, called to be an apostle*. Similarly for most of the other letters. But the formula is not universal. Hebrews and the letters of John are exceptions.

calling of the Apostles and the Holy and divine Spirit they had, I see to be related to their preachings.

20 The only exceptions are those passages where the Spirit of God and the Holy Spirit (which we spoke about in Chapter 1 [§§25ff.]) are taken for a sound mind, blessed and devoted to God, etc. For example, in 1 Corinthians 7:40 Paul says: *but in my opinion she is blessed if she remains as she is; moreover, I think also that the Spirit of God is in me.* By Spirit of God
25 here he means his own mind, as the context of the statement indicates. For he means: I judge a widow who does not wish to marry a second husband blessed; that is according to my opinion, I who have decided to live celibate and who think that I myself am blessed. And we find many other things in this manner, which I judge it superfluous to mention here.

30 [14] So, since we must maintain that the Apostles composed their Letters only according to the natural light, we must now see how the Apostles could teach, solely on the basis of natural knowledge, things which don't fall under it. But if we attend to what we've said in Chapter 7 about the interpretation of Scripture, there will be no difficulty for us here. For though the things contained in the Bible for the most part
[III/156] surpass our grasp, nevertheless we can discuss them safely, provided the only principles we admit are sought from Scripture itself. And in this same way also the Apostles were able to infer and extract many things from the things they'd seen, the things they'd heard, and finally the
5 things they'd had from revelation. They were also able to teach men these things, as they pleased.

[15] Next, although religion, as the Apostles preached it, by relating the simple story of Christ, does not fall under reason, nevertheless, by the natural light everyone can easily appreciate its most important themes, which, like the whole of Christ's teaching,^{10**} consist chiefly of
10 moral lessons. Finally, the Apostles did not need a supernatural light to accommodate to men's common power of understanding the religion they had previously confirmed by signs, so that each one would easily accept it from the heart. Nor did they need it to advise men about that religion.

15 [16] That's what the Letters were for: to teach and advise men in the way each Apostle judged best for confirming them in religion. Here we must note what we said a little while ago: that the Apostles received not only the power to preach the story of Christ as Prophets,
20 confirming it with signs, but also the authority to teach and advise in

10. **[ADN. XXVII] That is, what Jesus taught on the mount and what St. Matthew mentions in chapter 5ff. [This note appears only in Saint-Glain's translation and seems unlikely to be genuine. See the discussion in ALM, 31.]

the way each one judged best. In 2 Timothy 1:11 Paul¹¹ indicates each of these gifts clearly: *for this [gospel] I have been appointed a preacher and*
 25 *an Apostle and a teacher of the nations*. Similarly in 1 Timothy 2, v. 7: *for this I have been appointed a preacher and an Apostle (I speak the truth through Christ, I do not lie), a teacher of the nations with faith (NB) and truth*. [17] With these words, I say, he clearly indicates a confirmation of each status: being an Apostle and being a teacher.

But he signifies the authority to advise whomever and whenever he wished in these words (Philemon 8): *although I have much freedom in*
 30 *Christ to command you to do what is proper; nevertheless, [I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love]*. Here it should be noted that if Paul had received from God, as a Prophet, the things it was proper to command Philemon, and if he was supposed to command them as a Prophet, then surely it would not have been permissible for him to change God's command into an entreaty. So he must be understood to speak of a freedom to advise, which was his as a Teacher, and not as a Prophet.

[III/157] [18] Nevertheless, unless we want to appeal to the argument that he who has the authority to teach also has the authority to choose the way he wants to teach, it doesn't yet follow clearly enough that the Apostles could choose the way of teaching each of them judged best,
 5 but only that in virtue of their office as Apostles, they were not only Prophets, but also Teachers.

[19] It will be better to demonstrate the whole matter from Scripture alone. For from Paul's words in Romans 15:20 it is clearly established that each of the Apostles chose his individual way: *taking care anxiously that I should not preach where the name of Christ had been invoked, so as*
 10 *not to build on another man's foundation*. [20] Surely if they all had the same way of teaching, and all built the Christian religion on the same foundation, Paul could have no reason to call another Apostle's foundations another man's, since they were the same as his. But since he
 15 does call them another man's, we must conclude that each built religion on a different foundation, and that the same thing happened to the Apostles in their teaching as happens to other teachers who have their own individual methods of teaching: they would always rather teach those who are completely uneducated and have not begun to learn languages or sciences from anyone else (or even mathematics, whose
 20 truth no one doubts).

[21] Again, if we survey these Letters with some attention, we shall see that in religion itself the Apostles indeed agree, but that they differ

11. Although both the letters addressed to Timothy purport to be by Paul, "very few scholars now accept that claim" (HCSB, 2015).

greatly in the foundations. For to strengthen men in religion, and to show them that salvation depends only on God's grace, Paul taught
 25 them that no one can boast of his works, but only of his faith, and that no one is justified by works (see Romans 3:27–28). At the same time, he taught the whole doctrine of predestination.¹² James, on the other hand, taught in his letter that man is justified by works and
 30 not by faith alone (see James 2:24); setting aside all those arguments of Paul, he expressed in a few words the whole doctrine of religion.

[22] Finally, there is no doubt that the fact that the Apostles built religion on different foundations gave rise to many disputes and schisms, which have tormented the church incessantly from the time of the Apostles to the present day, and will surely continue to torment it
 [III/158] forever, until at last someday religion is separated from philosophic speculations and reduced to those very few and very simple doctrines Christ taught his followers.

[23] This was impossible for the Apostles, because the Gospel was unfamiliar to men. Lest the novelty of its doctrine greatly offend men's
 5 ears, they accommodated it as much as they could to their contemporaries' mentality (see 1 Corinthians 9:19–20)¹³ and constructed it on the foundations which were most familiar and accepted at that time.
 [24] That's why none of the Apostles philosophized more than Paul, who was called to preach to the nations. But the others, preaching to
 10 the Jews, who disdained Philosophy, also accommodated themselves to the mentality of their audience (on this see Galatians 2:11[–14]) and taught a religion devoid of philosophic speculations. How happy our age would surely be now, if we saw religion again free of all superstition!

12. E.g., in Rom. 8:28–39, 9:11–29, 11:1–10.

13. "For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law" (NRSV).

[III/158]

CHAPTER XII

*On the true original text of the divine Law,
Why Scripture can be called Sacred, and
Why it can be called the Word of God.
Finally it is shown that
insofar as it contains the Word of God,
it has reached us uncorrupted*

[1] Those who consider the Bible, just as it is, as a Letter God has sent men from heaven,¹ will no doubt cry out that I have committed a sin against the Holy Ghost,² because I've maintained

that the word of God is faulty, mutilated, corrupted, and inconsistent;
25 that we have only fragments of it, and finally,
that the original text of the covenant God made with the Jews has been lost.

[2] But I don't doubt that if they were willing to weigh the matter carefully, they would immediately stop protesting. For both reason itself and the statements of the Prophets and Apostles clearly proclaim that
30 God's eternal word and covenant, and true religion, are inscribed by divine agency in men's hearts, i.e., in the human mind, and that this is the true original text of God, which he himself has stamped with his seal, i.e., with the idea of him, as an image of his divinity.

[III/159] [3] To the first Jews Religion was imparted as a law, handed down in writing, because then they were considered as like infants. But later Moses (Deuteronomy 30:6) and Jeremiah (31:33) proclaimed to them a time to come, when God would inscribe his law in their hearts. So at one time it was appropriate to contend for a law written in tablets
5 (but only for the Jews, and particularly the Sadducees). It is not suitable at all for those who have it written in their minds.

1. See, for example, Maimonides' eighth fundamental principle of Judaism, *Maimonides Reader*, 420–21. Droetto/Giancotti cite Augustine (*Exposition 2 of Psalm 30*, §2: "The author is the prophet, but more truly the Holy Spirit who spoke through the prophet") and Gregory the Great (*Epistola XXXI, Ad Theodorum medicum*, PL 77, 706A: "What is Sacred Scripture if not a letter from God omnipotent to his creature?").

2. An allusion to Matt. 12:31–32, which says that one who speaks against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but that one who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not.

[4] Anyone who's willing to attend to these things will find nothing in what I've said above which is contrary to God's word, *or* to true Religion and faith, nor anything which could weaken it. On the contrary, he'll find that we strengthen it, as we've shown also toward the end of
 10 Chapter 10 [§42]. If this weren't the case, I would have decided to be completely silent about these matters. Indeed, to escape all difficulties, I would have gladly conceded that the most profound mysteries are hidden in Scripture. But because that has given rise to an intolerable superstition and to the other ruinously bad consequences we spoke about in the preamble to Chapter 7 [§§1–6], I thought I ought not to
 15 refrain from saying these things, especially because religion does not require any superstitious embellishments. On the contrary, its splendor is diminished when it's adorned with such inventions.

[5] But [my critics] will say that, though the divine law is inscribed in our hearts, Scripture is nonetheless the word of God; so, it's no more permissible to say that Scripture is mutilated and distorted than it is to
 20 say this of the Word of God. I, on the other hand, fear that in their excessive zeal to be holy they may turn Religion into superstition, and indeed, may begin to worship likenesses and images, i.e., paper and ink, in place of the Word of God.

[6] This I know: I've said nothing unworthy of Scripture or the word
 25 of God. For I've maintained nothing which I have not demonstrated to be true by the most evident arguments. And for this reason I can also affirm with certainty that I have said nothing impious, nor anything which smells of impiety.

I confess that certain profane men, to whom religion is a burden, will be able to take what I have said as a license to sin, and without any reason, but only to surrender to their sensual pleasure, infer from this
 30 that Scripture is everywhere faulty and falsified, and so of no authority.

[7] But there's no remedy against people like that. As the old adage goes, you can't say anything so correctly that someone can't distort it by misinterpretation.³ Anyone who wants to indulge in sensual pleasures can easily find a reason for doing so wherever he likes. Those men long ago who had the original texts, and the ark of the covenant—indeed, the
 [III/160] Prophets and Apostles themselves—were no better or more obedient. Everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, has always been the same; in every age virtue has been extremely rare.⁴

[8] Nevertheless, to remove every scruple, we must show here in
 5 what way Scripture and any other silent thing ought to be called

3. An allusion to Terence's *Phormio* 696–97 (ALM).

4. Perhaps alluding to, but if so, moderating, Rom. 3:9–12. Cf. Preface, §14; TP vi, 6.

sacred and divine; next, what the word of God really is, and that it isn't contained in a certain number of books; and finally, that insofar as Scripture teaches the things necessary for obedience and salvation, it couldn't have been corrupted. From this everyone will easily be able to judge that we've said nothing against the word of God, and haven't
 10 given any opening for impiety.

[9] What is called sacred and divine is what is destined for the practice of piety and religion. It will be sacred only so long as men use it in a religious manner. If they cease to be pious, at the same time it too ceases to be sacred. And if they dedicate the same thing
 15 to impious purposes, then what before was sacred is made unclean and profane.

[10] For example, the Patriarch Jacob called a certain place *בית אל*, *the house of God* [Genesis 28:16–19], because it was there he worshipped the God who had been revealed to him. But the Prophets called that very place *בית און*, *the house of iniquity* (see Amos 5:5 and Hosea 10:5), because the Israelites, in accordance with the practice established by
 20 Jeroboam [1 Kings 12:27–33], used to sacrifice to idols there.

[11] Here's another example, which illustrates the point very clearly. Words have a definite meaning only from their use. If they should be so organized that, according to their usage, they move the people reading them to devotion, then those words will be sacred. So will
 25 a book written with the words organized that way. But if, afterward, the usage should be lost, so that the words have no meaning, or if the book should be completely neglected, whether from malice or because men no longer need it, then neither the words nor the book will be of any use. They will lose their holiness. Finally, if the same words should be organized in another way, or a usage should prevail according to which they are to be taken in an opposite meaning, then the words and the book which were previously sacred will be unclean
 30 and profane.

[12] From this it follows that nothing is sacred or profane or impure in itself, outside the mind, but only in relation to the mind. Many passages in Scripture establish this with utmost clarity. To mention one or two, Jeremiah says (7:4) that the Jews of his time wrongly called the temple of Solomon the temple of God. For as he goes on to say
 [III/161] in the same chapter, the name of God could be associated with that temple only so long as it was frequented by men who worship God and preserve justice. But if it was frequented by murderers, thieves, idolaters, and other wicked men, then it was rather a den of criminals.

5 [13] What became of the ark of the covenant? I've often wondered at the fact that nowhere does Scripture tell us. This much is certain:

it perished, or was burned with the temple,⁵ even though the Hebrews had nothing more sacred, nothing they had greater reverence for. In the same way, also, Scripture is sacred and its statements divine just as long as it moves men to devotion toward God. But if they completely neglect it, as the Jews once did, it's nothing but paper and ink. They completely profane it, and leave it subject to corruption. So if it's then corrupted, or perishes, it's then false to say that the word of God is corrupted or perishes, just as it would also have been false to say in the time of Jeremiah that the temple, which then was the temple of God, perished in flames.

[14] Jeremiah says the same thing about the law itself. For he reproaches the impious people of his time in the following terms: *איכה תאמרו חכמים אנהנו ותורת יהוה אלתנו הלא לשקר עשה עט שקר סופרים*, *why do you say, we are wise and the law of God is with us. Certainly it was prepared in vain; in vain did the pen of the scribes write.*⁶ That is, even though you have Scripture, you are wrong to say that you have the law of God after you have made it null and void.

[15] Similarly, when Moses broke the first tablets [Exodus 32:19], what he angrily hurled from his hands and broke was not the word of God—who could even think this of Moses and of the word of God?—but only stones. Though previously these stones were sacred, because the covenant was inscribed on them—that covenant by which the Jews had bound themselves to obey God—after they had made that covenant null and void by worshipping the calf, the stones no longer had any holiness. For the same reason, the second tablets⁷ could also perish with the ark.

[16] So it's no wonder that Moses' first originals are also not now extant and that the things we described above have happened to the books we do have, when the true original of the divine covenant, the holiest thing of all, could totally perish. Let our critics, then, stop accusing us of impiety. We have said nothing against the word of God and have not debased it. If they have any just anger, let them turn it against those ancients whose wickedness took away the religious status of God's ark, temple, law, and every other sacred thing, and made them liable to corruption.

5. 1 Kings 8:6–8 reports that when the temple was dedicated, the priests placed the ark of the covenant in its inner sanctuary; 2 Chron. 36:15–21 describes the fall of Jerusalem and the burning of the temple (ALM). But Nebuchadnezzar did take some of the treasures of the temple to Babylon.

6. Where Spinoza has *אלה*, the Masoretic text has *אכן הנה*. The reference is to Jer. 8:8, whose translation varies widely, both in ancient and in modern versions. For discussion, see Holladay 1986, 281–83.

7. The new tablets whose making is recorded in Exod. 34.

[17] Again, if, in accordance with what the Apostle says in 2 Corinthians 3:3, they have in themselves the Letter of God, written not in ink, but with the Spirit of God, and not on tablets of stone, but on the fleshly tablets of the heart, let them stop worshipping the letter
 5 and being so anxious about it.

With this I think I've explained sufficiently in what way Scripture is to be considered Sacred and divine. [18] Now we must see how to rightly understand the expression דבר יהוה, *debar Yahweh* (the word of Yahweh). דבר, *dabar*, of course, means *word*, *utterance*, *edict*, and *thing*.
 10 Moreover, in Ch. 1 [§§29–31], we showed why a thing is said in Hebrew to be of God and is referred to God. From these considerations we can easily understand what Scripture means by God's word, utterance, edict, and thing. So it's not necessary to repeat all these things here, nor to repeat what we showed regarding miracles, in Ch. 6 [§§39–51]. [19] It will be enough just to call attention to the main points, so that what
 15 we want to say about these matters here may be better understood.

[First,] when "the word of God" is predicated of some subject which is not God himself, it means properly the Divine law we treated in Ch. 4, that is, the religion common to the whole human race, *or* universal religion. On this see Isaiah 1:10, where he teaches the true way of living, which does not consist in ceremonies, but in loving-kindness and
 20 a true heart, which he calls, indifferently, God's law and God's word.

[20] Secondly, "the word of God" is taken metaphorically for the very order of nature and fate (because it really depends on and follows from the eternal decree of the divine nature), and especially for what the Prophets had foreseen of this order. It has this meaning because
 25 they did not perceive future things through natural causes, but as decisions or decrees of God.

[21] Finally, "the word of God" is also taken for every proclamation of a Prophet, insofar as he has perceived it by his own special power, or Prophetic gift, and not by the natural light common [to all]. It has this meaning chiefly because the Prophets were in fact accustomed to
 30 perceive God as a lawgiver, as we showed in Ch. 4 [§§38–50].

[22] For these three reasons, then, Scripture is called the word of God: because it teaches the true religion, whose eternal author is God; because it relates predictions of future things as God's decrees; and, finally, because those who were really its authors mostly taught, not
 [III/163] by the common natural light, but by a certain special light, and introduced God as speaking these things. And though Scripture contains in addition many things which are merely historical, and are perceived by the natural light, nevertheless it takes its name ["Word of God"] from what is more precious.

CHAPTER XII: THE WORD OF GOD

[23] From this we easily see why God should be understood to be
5 the author of the Bible: because of the true religion taught in those
books, not because he wanted to communicate to men a certain num-
ber of books.

[24] And from this we can also know why the Bible is divided into
the books of the Old Testament and the New: before the coming
of Christ the Prophets were accustomed to preach religion as the
10 law of their Country and by the power of the covenant entered into
in the time of Moses; but after the coming of Christ the Apostles
preached the same [religion] to everyone as a universal law, solely
by the power of the passion of Christ. [The books of the New
Testament are] not [new] because they are different in doctrine, or
because they were written as original texts of a covenant, or because
the universal religion was new. That religion, which is most natural,
15 was new only in relation to those who had not known it. *He was
in the world*, says John the Evangelist (John 1:10), *and yet the world
did not know him*.

[25] So even if we had fewer books than we do, either of the Old
Testament or of the New, we would still not be deprived of the word
of God, by which we ought to understand the true religion (as we've
20 already said)—no more than we think now that we are deprived of God's
word, even though we lack many other most important writings, like
the book of the Law, which was guarded scrupulously in the temple
as the original text of the covenant, and the books of the Wars, the
Chronicles, and many others, from which the books we have of the Old
Testament were gathered and assembled. This conclusion is confirmed
25 by many additional arguments.

[26] First, because the books of each Testament weren't written
by an explicit command, at one and the same time, for all ages, but
by chance, by certain men, as the time and their particular situation
required. This is clearly shown by the callings of the Prophets (who
30 were called to warn the impious people of their time), and also by the
Letters of the Apostles.

[27] Second, because it's one thing to understand Scripture and the
mind of the Prophets, and another to understand the mind of God,
i.e., the truth of the matter itself. This follows from what we showed in
Ch. 2 about the Prophets.⁸ And in Ch. 6 we showed that it also applies
35 to Histories and miracles.⁹ But in no way can we say this about those
passages which treat true religion and true virtue.

8. See particularly ii, 52–53, for a crisp summary of the conclusions of Ch. ii.

9. See particularly vi, 52–64.

[III/164] [28] Third, because the Books of the Old Testament were chosen from many [candidates], and in the end, were assembled and approved by a council of Pharisees, as we showed in Ch. 10 [§45]. Moreover, the books of the New Testament too were added to the Canon by the decisions of certain Councils, which also rejected as illegitimate
 5 other books many people considered sacred. Now the members of these Councils—both of the Pharisees and of the Christians—were not Prophets, but only Learned and wise men. Nevertheless, it must be conceded that in this choice they had the word of God as a standard. So, before they approved all the books, they must have had knowledge
 10 of the word of God.

[29] Fourth, because the Apostles did not write as Prophets, but (as we said in the preceding Chapter) as Learned men, and chose the manner of teaching they judged would be easier for the disciples they wanted to teach at that time, it follows (as we also concluded at the
 15 end of that Chapter) that their letters contain many things which we can now do without in the matter of religion.

[30]¹⁰ Fifth, and finally, because there are four evangelists in the New Testament. Who will believe that God wanted to tell Christ's story four times over, and communicate it to men in writing? It's true that some things are contained in one gospel which are not there in another, so that
 20 one often aids in understanding the other. Still, we should not conclude from that that everything related in these four works was necessary for men to know, and that God chose the evangelists to write their works so that the Story of Christ would be better understood. [31] For each preached his own Gospel in a different place, and each wrote what he
 25 preached, simply, to tell the Story of Christ clearly, not to explain the others. If now we sometimes understand them more easily and better by comparing them with one another, that happens by chance and only in a few passages. Even if we knew nothing about those passages, the story would still be equally clear, and men no less blessed.

[32] By these arguments we've shown that Scripture is properly called
 30 the word of God only in relation to religion, *or* in relation to the universal divine law. Now it remains to show that, insofar as it is properly so-called, it is not faulty, distorted, or mutilated. But what I here call faulty, distorted and mutilated, is what is written and constructed so incorrectly that the meaning of the statement cannot be worked out

10. Although Spinoza had disavowed any intention of examining the books of the New Testament as he had those of the Old Testament (x, 48), here he does raise critical questions about the gospels: why do we have four different accounts of the life of Jesus? is everything in them necessary for our salvation? if one gospel contains teachings not present in the others, is its teaching essential?

[III/165] from linguistic usage or gathered solely from Scripture. [33] For I don't want to claim that Scripture, insofar as it contains the Divine law, has always preserved the same accents, the same letters and the same words. I leave this to be demonstrated by the Masoretes and those who superstitiously worship the letter. I claim only that the meaning—the only thing in a statement which gives us a reason for calling it divine—has reached us without corruption, even though we may suppose that the words by which it was first signified have very frequently been changed. For as we have said, this does not take anything at all away from the divinity of Scripture. Scripture would be equally divine even if it were written in other words or another language.

10 [34] So no one can doubt that we have received the divine law without its being corrupted in this way. From Scripture itself we have perceived its most important themes without any difficulty or ambiguity: to love God above all else, and to love your neighbor as yourself.¹¹ But this cannot be forged, nor can it be something written by a hasty or erring pen. For if Scripture ever taught anything other than this, it would also have had to teach everything else differently, since this is the foundation of the whole religion. If it were taken away, the whole structure would collapse in a moment. [35] Such a Scripture would not be the same book we are speaking about here; it would be a totally different book. That Scripture has always taught this, that here no error which could corrupt the meaning has crept in, is indisputable. That would be noticed immediately by everyone; no one could have distorted this without his wickedness being obvious.

[36] Since, then, we must maintain that this foundation is uncorrupted, we must also grant the same about those other [teachings] which uncontroversially follow from it, and are equally fundamental: that God exists; that he provides for all; that he is omnipotent; that in accordance with his decree, things go well with the pious, but badly with the wicked; and that our salvation depends only on his grace. For Scripture everywhere teaches all these things clearly, and must always have taught them. Otherwise all its other teachings would be hollow and without foundation.¹²

30 [37] The remaining moral precepts must be held to be no less uncorrupted, since they follow with utmost clarity from this universal foundation: to defend justice, to aid the poor, to kill no one, to covet nothing belonging to another, and so on. No man's wickedness

11. Cf. Deut. 6:4–9, 10:12–22; Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34; Luke 10:25–28.

12. Cf. vii, 27, and the annotation there.

could corrupt any of these things; time could not obliterate them. For if any of these teachings were destroyed, their universal foundation
[III/166] would have immediately taught them again, especially the teaching of loving-kindness, which both Testaments commend everywhere, in the strongest terms.

[38] What's more, though you can't invent any crime so detestable that no one has ever committed it, still, no one tries to destroy the
5 laws to excuse his own crimes, or to introduce anything impious as an eternal and salutary teaching. For we see that man's nature is such that anyone who does something shameful, whether he be a King or a subject, is eager to embellish his deed with such circumstances that he is believed not to have done anything contrary to justice or propriety.
10 We conclude, then, without exception, that the whole universal divine law which Scripture teaches, has reached our hands uncorrupted.

[39] In addition to these, there are also other things we can't doubt have been handed down to us in good faith: the main points of the Historical
15 Narratives in Scripture. These were quite well known to everyone. The common people among the Jews had long been accustomed to sing the past history of their nation in Psalms. Also, the main points of Christ's deeds and passion were immediately spread throughout the whole Roman Empire.¹³ So it's not at all credible that later generations handed down the most important part of these narratives in a form different from that
20 in which they had received them from the first generations—not unless most men agreed in this deception, which is incredible.

[40] So whatever has been corrupted or is faulty could have happened only in other matters: for example, in some circumstance of a narrative or a Prophecy, to move the people to greater devotion, or in some miracle, to torment the Philosophers, or, finally, in speculative
25 matters, after schismatics had begun to introduce these into religion, so that everyone might prop up his own inventions by abusing divine authority.¹⁴ But it matters little, for our salvation, whether such things have been perverted or not. I shall show this in detail in the following Chapter, though I think it is already established by what I've previously said, especially in Chapter 2.

13. Some Spinoza scholars take this argument for the reliability of the gospel accounts at face value. Cf. Matheron 1971, p. 85. But Spinoza greatly exaggerates the speed with which the story of Jesus spread throughout the Roman empire, and it seems that he ought to have realized, from his knowledge of Josephus and Tacitus, that even late in the first century knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus was at best sketchy among non-Christians. See Meier 1991, Chh. 3 and 4.

14. On this subject, see Ehrman 1993.

[III/167]

CHAPTER XIII

*That Scripture teaches only the simplest matters,
that it aims only at obedience,
and teaches nothing about the divine Nature,
except what men can imitate
by a certain manner of living*

[1] In Ch. 2 of this Treatise we showed that the Prophets had only a special power to imagine things, not a special power to understand them, that God didn't reveal to them any secrets of Philosophy, but only the simplest matters, and that he accommodated himself to their preconceived opinions.

10 [2] Next, in Ch. 5 we showed that Scripture imparts and teaches things in the way which enables each person to most easily perceive them. It does not deduce them from axioms and definitions and connect them with one another. It just speaks simply. To create trust it confirms what it says only by experience—that is, by miracles and historical
15 narratives, relating these matters in a style and with expressions most apt to move ordinary people's hearts. On this see Ch. 6, regarding the things demonstrated under heading 3 [§§39–51].

[3] Finally, in Ch. 7 we showed that the difficulty of understanding Scripture lies only in its language, not in the loftiness of its theme.

To these considerations we may add that the Prophets did not preach
20 to the wise, but to all Jews, without exception, and that the Apostles customarily taught the doctrine of the Gospel in the Churches, places where everyone met.

[4] From all this it follows that the doctrine of Scripture does not contain lofty speculations, or philosophical matters, but only the simplest
25 things, which anyone, no matter how slow, can perceive.¹ I can't wonder enough at the mentality of the people I spoke about above,² who see in Scripture mysteries so profound that no human language can explain them, and who have then introduced into religion so many matters of

1. ALM note the similarity here between Spinoza and Hobbes, *Leviathan* viii, 26. The issue there is the interpretation of passages in Scripture which seem, on a literal reading, to oppose Copernican astronomy. See also Galileo's *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina*, in Finocchiaro 1989.

2. See, for example, the Preface, §§15–19, or ix, 33–34.

philosophic speculation that the Church seems to be an Academy, and Religion, science, or rather, a disputation.

- 30 [5] But why should I wonder that men who boast that they have a supernatural light are unwilling to grant superiority in knowledge to Philosophers, who have nothing but the natural light? What would really be wonderful would be if they taught anything new which was a matter of pure speculation, and had not previously been a commonplace
[III/168] among the pagan Philosophers—whom they nevertheless say have been blind. If you ask what mysteries they see hidden in Scripture, you will find nothing but the inventions of Aristotle or Plato or someone else like that.³ Often it is easier for any Layman to dream these things up,
5 than it is for a learned man to find them in Scripture.

[6] Of course we don't want to maintain without qualification that nothing which is a matter of pure speculation pertains to the teaching of Scripture. In the preceding Chapter we cited a number of things of this kind as fundamentals of Scripture [xii, 34–36]. All I maintain is this: there are very few such things, and they're very simple. [7] Moreover,
10 I've resolved to show here which these are and how they are determined. This will be easy for us now that we know that the purpose of Scripture was not to teach the sciences. From this we can easily judge that it requires nothing from men but obedience, and condemns only stubbornness, not ignorance.

- 15 [8] Next, obedience to God consists only in the love of your neighbor—for as Paul says in Romans 13:8, he who loves his neighbor in order that he may obey God has fulfilled the Law. From this it follows that the only 'knowledge Scripture commends is that necessary for all men if they are to be able to obey God according to this prescription,
20 and without which men would necessarily be stiff-necked, or at least lacking in the discipline of obedience. It also follows that Scripture does not touch on speculations which do not tend directly to this end, whether they are concerned with the knowledge of God or the knowledge of natural things. So such speculations ought to be separated from revealed Religion.

- 25 [9] But even though everyone, as we've said, can now easily see these things, still, because the judgment of the whole of Religion depends on

3. Cf. Manasseh's commentary on the creation story of Genesis (1842/1972, I, 1–26), which is heavily influenced by Neoplatonic ideas. Note particularly that Manasseh justifies interpreting Mosaic theology in Platonic terms by accepting the theory that Plato had a better knowledge of Mosaic theology than Aristotle did because he had been a disciple of the Jewish elders (I, 8). As late as the nineteenth century Lindo will accept as probable that Plato received instruction from Jeremiah. ALM suggest that Spinoza may also have been thinking of Leo Hebraeus's *Dialogues of Love*, a work which was in his library.

this, I want to show the whole matter more carefully and to explain it more clearly. For this it's necessary to show, before anything else, that the intellectual, *or*, exact, knowledge of God is not a gift common to all the faithful, as obedience is. Next, we must show that the knowl-
 30 edge God, through the Prophets, has demanded of everyone, without exception, the knowledge everyone is bound to have, is nothing but knowledge of his Divine Justice and Loving-kindness. Both these things are easily demonstrated from Scripture itself.

[10] The first point [that Scripture teaches only a few, very simple truths about the nature of God] follows with utmost clarity from Exodus 6:3, where God says to Moses, to show the special grace he has given
 [III/169] to him: וָאֵרָא אֶל אַבְרָהָם אֶל יִצְחָק וְאֶל יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שַׁדַּי וְשְׁמִי יְהוָה לֹא נִודַעְתִּי לָהֶם, *and I was revealed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Yabweh I was not known to them.*⁴ To understand this passage better, note that *El Shaddai* in Hebrew means "God who suffices," because he gives
 5 to each person what suffices for that person. And though *Shaddai* by itself is often used for "God," still, there is no doubt that the name *El*, God, should always be understood.

[11] Next, note that there is no name in Scripture except *Yabweh* which makes known the absolute essence of God, without relation to created things.⁵ And therefore the Hebrews contend that only this
 10 name of God is peculiarly his, the others being common nouns.⁶ [12] And really, the other names of God, whether they are substantives or adjectives, are attributes which belong to God insofar as he is considered in relation to created things or is manifested through them. E.g., אֵל, *El*, or (with the paragodic letter ה, *he*) אֱלֹהִים, *Eloah*, means nothing
 15 but "the powerful," as we know. And this name belongs to God only in virtue of his excellence, as when we call Paul "the Apostle."

4. In English translations of the Hebrew Bible "El Shaddai" is commonly rendered "God Almighty." Genesis does in fact represent all three of the patriarchs as using the name "Yahweh." See, for example, Gen. 12:8, 15:2, 24:3, 26:22, 27:7, 28:13, 32:10, and 49:1–28. Modern scholarship takes the inconsistency of these passages with Exodus 6:3 as an important indication that they reflect different traditions. Cf. Anchor Genesis, xxii–xlili. Spinoza will offer a different explanation in §§18–19.

5. Cf. the discussion of the divine name in ii, 36, where Spinoza takes Exod. 3:13–15 as his text. Ashkenazi, 25n, suggests that Ibn Ezra's commentary on Exodus 3:15 may be the most direct source of what Spinoza says here. Manasseh 1842/1972, I, 103–11, provides a useful survey of medieval Jewish commentary on this topic, citing particularly Halevi 1964, II, 2, and Maimonides *Guide* I, 61–63. See also the discussion of this passage in Zac 1965, 79–84.

6. See Spinoza's classification of the different kinds of noun in ch. 5 of his *Compendium of Hebrew Grammar*. Spinoza uses the term "noun" (*nomen*) quite broadly, classing as nouns "any word by which we signify or indicate something which falls under the intellect" (Gebhardt I, 303). This category includes not only "substantive nouns" (our proper and common nouns), but also adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, participles, and infinitives.

Otherwise the virtues of his power are explained, as *El* (the powerful one) the great, the awe-inspiring, the just, the merciful, etc., or to refer comprehensively to all his virtues at once, this name is used in the plural number,⁷ with a singular meaning, a very frequent occurrence in Scripture.

[13] Now, since God says to Moses that he was not known to his forefathers by the name *Yahweh*, it follows that they did not know any attribute of God which explains his absolute essence, but only attributes which explain his effects and promises, i.e., his power, insofar as it is manifested through visible things. [14] But God does not say this to Moses to accuse the patriarchs of lacking faith; on the contrary, his purpose is to praise their trustingness and faith, which led them to believe God's promises to be valid and lasting, even though they did not have a knowledge of God as special as that of Moses. (Although Moses had more lofty thoughts about God, nevertheless he doubted the divine promises, and complained to God that, instead of the promised deliverance, he had changed the Jews' affairs for the worse).⁸

[15] Therefore, since the Patriarchs did not know God's special name, and God tells Moses this fact to praise their simplicity of heart and faith, and at the same time to put on record the special grace granted to Moses, from this our first conclusion follows with utmost clarity:

[III/170] men are not obliged by a command to know God's attributes; this is a special gift granted only to some of the faithful.

To show this by many Scriptural testimonies would not be worth the trouble. [16] Who doesn't see that knowledge of God was not equal in all the faithful? who doesn't see that no one can be wise on command, any more than he can live on command, or exist on command? Men, women, children, everyone in fact, is equally able to obey on command. But not everyone is equally able to be wise.

[17] Someone may say: indeed, it's not necessary to understand God's attributes, but it's quite necessary to believe in them, simply, without any demonstration. But anyone who says this is talking nonsense. Invisible things, and those which are the objects only of the mind, can't be seen by any other eyes than by demonstrations.⁹ Someone who doesn't have demonstrations doesn't see anything at all in these things. If they repeat something they've heard about them, it no more touches or shows their

7. A reference to the term *Elohim*, which is plural in number, but only sometimes plural in meaning, sometimes being used as a proper name for God.

8. The reference seems to be to Exod. 5:22–23.

9. Cf. E V P23S. The metaphor is also found in Leo Hebraeus, *Dialogues on Love*, 3rd Dialogue (ALM).

mind than do the words of a Parrot or an automaton, which speaks without a mind or without meaning.

15 [18] Before I go any further, I need to show why it's often said in Genesis that the Patriarchs taught in the name Yahweh, which seems completely contrary to what we just said.¹⁰ If we attend to what we showed in Ch. 8, we'll easily be able to reconcile these statements. For in that Chapter we showed that the writer of the Pentateuch does
20 not indicate things and places by precisely the same names they had in the time he's speaking about, but by the names they were better known by in his own time. [19] So the God the Patriarchs taught in Genesis is indicated by the name Yahweh, not because the forefathers knew him by this name, but because the Jews accorded this name the greatest reverence.

25 We must say this, I maintain, because our passage from Exodus says explicitly that the Patriarchs did not know God by this name, but also because in Exodus 3:13 Moses wants to know God's name. If it had been known before then, Moses too, at least, would have known it. We
30 must, then, draw the conclusions we were arguing for: that the faithful Patriarchs did not know this name of God, and that the knowledge of God was a gift of God, not a command.

[20] It's time now to pass to the second point, to show that God through the Prophets asks no other knowledge of himself from men than the knowledge of his divine Justice and Loving-kindness, i.e., such attributes of God as men can imitate in a certain way of life. Jeremiah
[III/171] teaches this most explicitly. [21] For in 22:15[–16], speaking of King Josiah, he says, אֲבִיךָ הָלָא אָכַל וּשְׁתָּה וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בָּאָרֶץ אִז טוֹב לוֹ דָן דִּין, *Your father; indeed, ate, and drank, and passed judgment, and did justice, and then (it was) well with him; he judged the right of the poor and the needy, and then (it was) well with him; for (NB) this is to know me, said Yahweh.*

No less clear is the passage in 9:23:¹² אֲךָ בִּזְאת יִתְהַלֵּל הַמִּתְהַלֵּל הַשָּׂכֵל וַיְדוּעַ, *let each one glory only in this, that he understands me and knows me, that I Yahweh practice loving-kindness, judgment and justice on the earth, for I delight in these things, says Yahweh.*

10. The prima facie inconsistency between Exod. 6:3 and passages like Gen. 15:7 was a traditional problem in Jewish biblical commentary, discussed by Manasseh 1842/1972, I, 55–56. See also xiii, 10.

11. The Hebrew text reproduced here (and in the first edition, Gebhardt, and ALM) contains two variations from the Masoretic Text.

12. Verse 9:24 in some Bibles. The Hebrew follows the first edition and ALM, which vary from MT and Gebhardt.

[22] We infer this also from Exodus 34:6–7. There, when Moses wants to see and to come to know him, God reveals only those attributes which display divine Justice and Loving-kindness.

15 Finally, we should note especially that passage in John which we'll discuss later,¹³ where, because no one has seen God, he explains God only through loving-kindness, and concludes that whoever has loving-kindness really has and knows God.

[23] We see, then, that Jeremiah, Moses and John sum up the knowledge of God each person is bound to have by locating it only (as we
20 maintained) in this: that God is supremely just and supremely merciful, *or*, that he is the unique model of the true life.

[24] To this we may add that Scripture does not give explicitly any definition of God, does not prescribe embracing any other attributes of God beyond those just mentioned, and does not explicitly commend
25 any as it does these. From all this we conclude that the intellectual knowledge of God, which considers his nature as it is in itself (a nature men cannot imitate by any particular way of life and cannot take as a model for instituting the true way of life), does not in any way pertain
30 to faith or to revealed religion. So men can be completely mistaken about this without wickedness.

[25] It's not at all surprising, then, that God accommodated himself to the imaginations and preconceived opinions of the Prophets, and that (as we showed in Ch. 2 with many examples) the faithful have cultivated different opinions about God.

[26] Again, it's not at all surprising that the Sacred books everywhere
[III/172] speak so improperly about God, and attribute to him hands, feet, eyes, ears, a mind, and local motion, as well as emotions, like Jealousy, compassion, etc., or that they depict him as a Judge, and as sitting in the heavens on a royal throne, with Christ at his right hand. They speak
5 according to the power of understanding of the common people, whom Scripture is concerned to make obedient, not learned.

[27] Nevertheless, the general run of Theologians have contended that if they could see by the natural light that any of these things did not agree with the divine nature, they would have to be interpreted metaphorically (whereas what escaped their grasp must be taken literally).
10 But if everything in Scripture which is found to be of this kind necessarily had to be interpreted and understood metaphorically, Scripture would be written not for ordinary people—and the uneducated common people—but only for the wisest, and especially for Philosophers.

13. The reference is to 1 John 4:12–16, used as a motto on the title page of the TTP, and discussed in xiv, 17.

[28] Indeed, if it were impious to believe about God the things we have just mentioned—piously and with simplicity of heart—the
 15 Prophets would surely have been obliged to take the greatest care not to use such expressions, if only out of consideration for the weakness of the common people. On the contrary, they would have, above all, to teach, clearly and explicitly, God's attributes, as each person is bound to accept them. In fact they haven't done this anywhere.

[29] So we must not for a moment believe that opinions, considered
 20 in themselves and without regard to works, have any piety or impiety in them. Instead we should say that a person believes something piously only insofar as his opinions move him to obedience, and impiously only insofar as he takes a license from them to sin or rebel. So, if anyone becomes stiff-necked by believing truths, he is really impious; on the other hand, if he becomes obedient by believing falsehoods, he has a
 25 pious faith. For we have shown that the true knowledge of God is not a command, but a divine gift, and that God asks of man no other knowledge [of himself] than knowledge of his divine Justice and Loving-kindness. This knowledge is not necessary for the sciences, but only for obedience.¹⁴

[III/173]

CHAPTER XIV

*What is faith, who are the faithful,
 what the foundations of faith are, and finally,
 that it is separated from Philosophy*

[1] For a true knowledge of faith the chief thing to know is that Scrip-
 5 ture is accommodated to the grasp, not only of the Prophets, but also of the fluctuating and inconstant common people of the Jews. No one who pays even a little attention can fail to know that. Anyone who indiscriminately accepts everything contained in Scripture as its universal and unconditional teaching about God, and doesn't know accurately what
 10 has been accommodated to the grasp of the common people, will be unable not to confuse the opinions of the common people with divine

14. In Colerus's biography of Spinoza there is an anecdote about a conversation he had with his landlady which has seemed to many apt here: "One day his landlady asked him whether he believed that she could be saved in the religion she professed. He answered: 'Your religion is a good one, you need not look for any other, nor doubt that you may be saved in it, provided, whilst you apply yourself to piety, you live at the same time a peaceable and quiet life.'" Colerus 1706, 41. Spinoza's landlady was a Lutheran. For an illuminating discussion of this incident, see Cook 1995.

doctrine, hawk human inventions and fancies as divine teachings, and abuse the authority of Scripture.

[2] Who doesn't see that this is the principal reason why the sectaries
 15 teach as doctrines of the faith so many and such contrary opinions,
 and confirm them by many examples from Scripture? That's why it
 long ago became a Proverb among the Dutch that *geen ketter zonder
 letter* [There is no heretic without a text.] For the Sacred Books were
 written not by one person only, nor for the common people of one
 age, but by many men, of different mentalities, and of different ages.
 20 If we calculate how long these ages lasted, we will find it to be about
 two thousand years—possibly much longer.

[3] Still, we don't want to accuse the sectaries of impiety just because
 they accommodate the words of Scripture to their own opinions. For
 as Scripture was accommodated to the grasp of the common people,
 so everyone is permitted to accommodate it to his own opinions, if he
 25 sees that in that way he can obey God more wholeheartedly in matters
 of justice and loving-kindness. [4] We do censure them, though, for
 being unwilling to grant this same freedom to others, and for persecut-
 ing, as God's enemies, everyone who does not think as they do, even
 though they are very honest and obedient to true virtue. On the other
 30 hand, they still love, as God's elect, those who give lip service to these
 opinions, even if they are most weak-minded. Nothing more wicked
 or harmful to the republic can be imagined.

[5] To establish, then, how far each person has the freedom to think
 [III/174] what he wishes with respect to faith, and whom we are bound to consider
 faithful, even though they think differently, we must determine what
 faith and its fundamentals are. I've resolved to do that in this Chapter,
 and at the same time to separate faith from Philosophy, which was the
 5 main purpose of this whole work. To show these things in an orderly
 way, let's review the chief purpose of the whole of Scripture. That will
 show us the true standard for determining what faith is.

[6] We said in the preceding Chapter that the purpose of Scripture
 is only to teach obedience. No one can deny this. Who does not see
 10 that each Testament is nothing but a training in obedience, and that
 neither Testament has any other aim than that men should obey from
 a true heart? [7] Not to mention now what I showed in the preced-
 ing Chapter [§§1–6], Moses did not try to convince the Israelites by
 reason, but was concerned only to bind them by a covenant, oaths
 15 and benefits. Next, he threatened the people with punishment if they
 did not obey the laws and urged them to obedience with rewards.
 All these are means only to obedience, not 'knowledge. [8] As for

the teaching of the Gospel, it contains nothing but simple faith: to trust in God, and to revere him, *or* (what is the same thing), to obey him.¹ To demonstrate a matter so obvious, I don't need to heap up
 20 Scriptural texts which commend obedience. There are a great many in each Testament.²

[9] Next, Scripture also teaches, very clearly and in many places, what each person must do to obey God. The whole law consists only in this:
 25 loving one's neighbor. So no one can deny that one who, according to God's command, loves his neighbor as himself is really obedient, and according to the law, blessed. But one who hates or fails to care for his neighbor is a stiff-necked rebel.

[10] Finally, everyone agrees that Scripture was written and published, not only for the learned, but for all people, of every age and kind.³ From these [three]⁴ considerations alone it follows very clearly that the only beliefs we are bound by Scriptural command to have are those which are absolutely necessary to carry out this command. So this command itself is the unique standard of the whole universal faith. Only through it are we to determine all the doctrines of that faith, the beliefs everyone is bound to accept.

[III/175] [11] Since this is very plain, and since everything can be deduced legitimately from this foundation alone, by reason alone, everyone may judge for himself how so many disagreements could have arisen in the Church. Could they have had other causes than the ones we mentioned
 5 at the beginning of Ch. 7?

[12] These very disagreements, then, force me to show here how to determine the doctrines of the faith from the foundation we've discovered. Unless I do this, and determine the matter by definite rules, people will rightly think I've done little to advance the discussion. Everyone will be able to introduce whatever he wishes, on the pretext
 10 that it's necessary as a means to obedience. This will be especially true when the question concerns the divine attributes.

[13] To show all this in an orderly way, I'll begin with a definition of faith. According to the foundation we've given, faith must be defined as follows:

1. Note that in the TTP Spinoza never cites any of those passages from John which provide a foundation in the gospels for Christian exclusivism by seeming to make acceptance of theological propositions about Jesus the path to salvation, such as John 3:16–18, 3:36, 11:25–26, 14:6, or 20:31. Cf. his account of Paul's teaching in xi, 21.

2. Cf. above xii, 34, and the passages cited in the note there. See also below, xix, 4.

3. Cf. above xiii, 16.

4. That is, the considerations adduced in §§6–8 (that the only purpose of Scripture is to teach obedience), §9 (that obedience requires only the love of one's neighbor), and §10 (that the commands of Scripture are directed to everyone).

[Faith is] thinking such things about God that if you had no knowledge of them, obedience to God would be destroyed, whereas if you are
 15 obedient to God, you necessarily have these thoughts.⁵

This definition is so clear, and follows so plainly from the things just demonstrated, that it needs no explanation. [14] Now I'll briefly show what follows from it:

I. Faith is not saving by itself, but only in relation to obedience.

20 Or as James says (James 2:17), faith by itself, without works, is dead. On this, see the whole second chapter of this Apostle's letter. It follows that

II. If someone is truly obedient, he must have a true and saving faith.

[15] For as we've said, if obedience is present, faith is also necessarily present. The same Apostle also says this explicitly in 2:18, viz.: *show*
 25 *me your faith without works and I shall show you my faith from my works.* And John says (in 1 John 4:7–8): *whoever loves* (i.e., loves his neighbor) *is born of God and knows God; whoever does not love does not know God, for God is Loving-kindness.* [16] From these things it follows next that

III. We can judge no one faithful or unfaithful except from their works.

30 If the works are good, they are still faithful, however much they may disagree with other faithful people in their doctrines. Conversely, if the works are bad, they are unfaithful, however much they may agree in words with other faithful people. For where there is obedience, there faith is also, and faith without works is dead.⁶

[17] John teaches the same thing explicitly in v. 13 of the same chapter: *by this*, he says, *we know that we remain in him and that he*
 [III/176] *remains in us, because he has given us of his spirit,*⁷ viz. Loving-kindness. For he had said previously that God is Loving-kindness, from which

5. Dan Garber, commenting on an earlier draft of this passage, suggested that *quibus ignoratis*, here translated "if you had no knowledge of them," should be rendered "if the person disregards them." This is possible linguistically, but I think xiv, 20–23, indicates that it is a question, not of failing to take note of what you know, or failing to act on what you know, but of not knowing (in a broad sense of "know," where the bar for knowledge is not set high).

6. Spinoza's use of 1 John to support his reduction of faith to obedience apparently aligns the author of this epistle with James rather than Paul in the dispute over justification described in xi, 21–24. If the author of this epistle was also the author of the fourth gospel, and if the author of the fourth gospel is properly aligned with Paul rather than James, Spinoza's alignment will be puzzling. This may be a reason for questioning the traditional ascription of the epistle to the author of the fourth gospel. (There are other reasons, as Brown 1997, 389–91, explains.)

7. 1 John 4:13, Spinoza's motto for the TTP. Cf. the title page.

(according to his principles, accepted at that time) he infers that he who has Loving-kindness really has the Spirit of God. Indeed, because no one has seen God, he infers from that that no one is aware of God,
 5 or acknowledges God, except by Loving-kindness toward his neighbor, and that in fact no one can come to know any other attribute of God beyond this Loving-kindness, insofar as we participate in it.

[18] If these arguments are not decisive,⁸ still they explain John's intention clearly enough. But much clearer is 1 John 2:3–4, where he
 10 teaches in the most explicit terms what we maintain here. *And by this*, he says, *we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says he knows him and does not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.* From these propositions it follows next that [19]

IV. the real Antichrists are those who persecute honest men who love Justice,
 15 because they disagree with them, and do not defend the same doctrines of faith they do.

For we know that loving Justice and Loving-kindness are enough to make a man faithful; and whoever persecutes the faithful is an Antichrist.
 [20] Finally, it follows that

V. faith requires, not so much true doctrines, as pious doctrines, i.e., doc-
 20 trines which move the heart to obedience, even if many of them do not have even a shadow of the truth.

This is true provided the person who accepts them does not know they are false. If he did, he would necessarily be a rebel. For how could someone who is eager to love Justice and to obey God worship as divine something he knows to be foreign to the divine nature? [21] But men
 25 can err from simplicity of heart; and as we have shown, Scripture does not condemn ignorance; it condemns only stubbornness.

Indeed, this must follow just from the definition of faith, all of whose elements must be sought from the universal foundation already shown and from the single purpose of the whole of Scripture—unless we want to mix in our own fancies. This definition does not explicitly require
 30 true doctrines, but only such doctrines as are necessary for obedience, which strengthen our hearts in love toward our neighbors. It is only because of this love that each of us (to speak with John) is in God and that God is in each of us.⁹

[22] The faith of each person should be considered pious or impious only on account of his obedience or stubbornness, not on account of

8. Bennett described the argument of §17 as “convoluted.” It does appear that Spinoza is not entirely confident that his reasoning is clear and compelling.

9. Alluding again to 1 John 4:13.

its truth or falsity. No one doubts that the common mentality of men
 [III/177] is extremely variable, and that not everyone is equally satisfied by all things. Opinions govern men in different ways: those which move one person to devotion, move another to laughter and contempt.

From this it follows that no doctrines belong to the catholic, *or*
 5 universal, faith which can be controversial among honest men. [23] Since doctrines must be judged only by the works [they encourage], controversial doctrines can be pious in relation to one person and impious in relation to another. Only those doctrines belong to the catholic faith, then, which obedience to God absolutely assumes, and
 10 ignorance of which makes obedience absolutely impossible.¹⁰ As for the rest, since each person knows himself better [than anyone else does], he must think as he sees will be better for him, to strengthen himself in his love of Justice. [24] In this way, I think, no room is left for controversies in the Church.

Now I shall not hesitate to enumerate the doctrines of the universal
 15 faith, *or* the fundamental principles aimed at by the whole of Scripture, all of which (as follows with utmost clarity from what we have shown in these two Chapters)¹¹ must tend to this point: that there is a supreme being, who loves Justice and Loving-kindness, and whom everyone, if he is to be saved, is bound to obey and to worship by practicing Justice and Loving-kindness toward his neighbor. From this it is easy to
 20 determine what the doctrines are. They are just these:

[25] I. *God exists, i.e., there is a supreme being, supremely just and merciful, or a model of true life.* Anyone who doesn't know, or doesn't believe, that God exists cannot obey him or know him as a Judge.

II. *He is unique.* No one can doubt that this too is absolutely required for
 25 supreme devotion, admiration and love toward God. For devotion, admiration and love arise only because the excellence of one surpasses that of the rest.

[26] III. *He is present everywhere, or everything is open to him.* If people believed some things were hidden from him, or did not know that he sees all, they would have doubts about the equity of the Justice by which he directs all things—or at least they would not be aware of it.

10. Bennett notes that here Spinoza seems to take the relevant beliefs to be both necessary and sufficient for obedience, and to think that his definition in xiv, 13, says as much. He objects that it doesn't (since the second clause of the definition is the contrapositive of the first, not its converse). Spinoza's use of 1 John 2:3–4 suggests that he does indeed intend to assert a biconditional; xiv, 29, seems particularly clear that the beliefs are necessary for obedience. That they should also be sufficient for obedience, though, seems inconsistent with Spinoza's teaching in the *Ethics* concerning weakness of will. Cf. E IV P17S.

11. That is, as I take it, from what has been shown in Chs. xii and xiii.

CHAPTER XIV: ON FAITH

30 IV. *He has the supreme right and dominion over all things, and does nothing because he is compelled by a law,*¹² *but acts only according to his absolute good pleasure and special grace.* For everyone is absolutely bound to obey him, whereas he is not bound to obey anyone.

[27] V. *The worship of God and obedience to him consist only in Justice and Loving-kindness, or in love toward one's neighbor;*

[III/178] VI. *Everyone who obeys God by living in this way is saved; the rest, who live under the control of pleasures, are lost.* If men did not firmly believe this, there would be no reason why they should prefer to obey God rather than pleasures; and

5 [28] VII. Finally, *God pardons the sins of those who repent.* No one is without sin.¹³ So if we did not maintain this, everyone would despair of his salvation, and there would be no reason why anyone would believe God to be merciful. Moreover, whoever firmly believes that God, out of mercy and the grace by which he directs everything, pardons men's sins, and who for this reason is more inspired by the love of God, that person really knows
10 Christ according to the Spirit, and Christ is in him.

[29] No one can fail to be aware that it is especially necessary to know all these things for men to be able, without exception, to obey God according to the command of the Law explained above. If any of these doctrines is taken away, obedience also is destroyed.

[30] As for the rest, it doesn't matter, as far as faith is concerned, [what anyone believes about such matters as]:

15 [i] what God (*or* that model of true life) is, whether he is fire, spirit, light, thought, etc., or

[ii] how he is a model of true life, whether because he has a just and merciful heart, or because all things exist and act through him (and hence that we too understand through him, and see through him, what is truly right, and good).

20 It's all the same, whatever each person maintains about these things.

[31] Again, it also doesn't matter, as far as faith is concerned, if someone believes

[iii] that God is everywhere according to his essence or according to his power, or

[iv] that he directs things from freedom or by a necessity of nature, or

[v] that he prescribes laws as a prince or teaches them as eternal truths, or

12. That is (as Matheron suggests in ALM), by a law someone else imposes on him.

13. ALM mention Eccles. 7:20, previously cited in iii, 38. We might add John 8:7 or Rom. 3:9–20. But Spinoza's reading of Eccles. 7:20 seems less bleak than Paul's, whose paraphrase of Eccles. in Rom. 3:10 (possibly influenced by the Septuagint translation) is quite harsh. See iii, 38, and TP, ii, 8.

25 [vi] that man obeys God from freedom of the will or from the necessity of the divine decree, or finally,

[vii] that the reward of the good and punishment of the evil are natural or supernatural.

[32] It doesn't matter, I say, as far as faith is concerned, how each person understands these and similar things, provided he doesn't conclude that he may take a greater license to sin, or that he should become
 30 less obedient to God. In fact, as we've already said, each person is bound to accommodate these doctrines of faith to his own power of understanding, and to interpret them for himself, as it seems to him easier for him to accept them without any hesitation, with complete agreement of the heart, so that he may obey God wholeheartedly. [33] For as we've already noted, the faith was originally revealed and written
 [III/179] according to the grasp and opinions of the Prophets, and of the common people of that time. In the same way, everyone now is bound to accommodate it to his own opinions, so that he can accept it without any mental conflict and without any hesitation. For we've shown that
 5 faith requires piety more than it does truth, and that it's pious and saving only because of the person's obedience. So no one is faithful except by reason of obedience. The person who displays the best arguments is not necessarily the one who displays the best faith; instead it's the one who displays the best works of Justice and Loving-kindness.

10 [34] How salutary this Doctrine is, how necessary in the republic, if people are to live peacefully and harmoniously, how many, and how great, are the causes of disturbance and wickedness it prevents—these things I leave everyone to judge for himself.

[35] But before I go any further, we should note here that from what we've just shown we can easily reply to the objections raised in Ch. 1
 15 [§§13–18], when we discussed God's speaking to the Israelites from Mt. Sinai. [36] Though the voice the Israelites heard could not give them any philosophical *or* mathematical certainty about God's existence, still, it was enough to make them wonder at God, insofar as they had previously known him, and to motivate them to obedience. That was the
 20 purpose of that manifestation. God did not want to teach the Israelites the absolute attributes of his essence. (He did not reveal any of them at that time.) He wanted to break their stubborn heart and win them over to obedience. So he addressed them with the sound of trumpets, with
 25 thunder, and with lightning, not with arguments. See Exodus 20:[18–21].¹⁴

14. Spinoza has Exod. 20:20, but the reference is clearly to the verses numbered 18–21 in the NRSV (and 15–18 in the NJPS translation).

[37] What remains now is for me to show, finally, that there are no dealings, or no relationship, between faith, *or* Theology, and Philosophy. No one can fail to see this now, who knows that these two faculties aim at, and are based on, completely different things. [38] For the goal
 30 of Philosophy is nothing but truth. But the goal of Faith, as we've shown abundantly, is nothing but obedience and piety. Furthermore, the foundations of Philosophy are common notions, and [its truth] must be sought only from nature. But the foundations of Faith are histories and language, and [those foundations] must be sought only from Scripture and revelation, as we showed in Ch. 7.

[39] Faith, therefore, grants everyone the greatest freedom to philosophize, so that without wickedness he can think whatever he wishes
 [III/180] about anything. Faith condemns as heretics and schismatics only those who teach opinions which encourage obstinacy, hatred, quarrels and anger. On the other hand, it considers faithful only those who encourage
 5 Justice and Loving-kindness as far as the powers of their reason and their faculties permit.

[40] Finally, since the things we have shown here are the main points I have been aiming at in this treatise, before I go any further I want to ask the reader most earnestly to take the time to read these two Chapters quite carefully, to weigh them again and again, and to be
 10 persuaded that we did not write them with the intention of introducing any novelties, but only to correct distortions, which we hope someday, finally, to see corrected.¹⁵

15. In the TTP Spinoza pursues two lines of argument to show that we should be free to philosophize: one via considerations about the nature of religion and the nature of philosophy, the other via considerations about the state. Chs. xiii and xiv represent the culmination of the first of these lines of argument.

[III/180]

CHAPTER XV

*Showing that Theology should not be
the handmaid of Reason,
nor Reason the handmaid of Theology,
and the reason which persuades us
of the authority of Holy Scripture*

[1] Those who don't know how to separate Philosophy from Theology debate whether Scripture should be the handmaid of reason, or reason should be the handmaid of Scripture—that is, whether the meaning of
20 Scripture ought to be accommodated to reason, or reason ought to be accommodated to Scripture. The skeptics, who deny the certainty of reason, defend the accommodation of reason to Scripture. The dogmatists defend the accommodation of Scripture to reason.

[2] But what we've already said shows that both parties are completely mistaken. Whichever opinion we follow, we must corrupt either reason or Scripture. We've shown that Scripture does not teach philosophic
25 matters, but only religious duty, and that everything contained in it was accommodated to the grasp and preconceived opinions of the common people. [3] So those who want to accommodate it to Philosophy ascribe to the Prophets many things they did not think of even in their dreams, and interpret their meaning wrongly. On the other hand, those who
30 make reason and Philosophy the handmaid of Theology are bound to admit as divine teachings the prejudices of the common people of long ago, to fill their minds with those prejudices, and to blind themselves. Each is insane, the former with reason, the latter without it.¹

[4] The first person among the Pharisees who openly maintained that
[III/181] Scripture must be accommodated to reason was Maimonides, whose opinion we reviewed in Ch. 7, and refuted by many arguments. Though this author had great authority among [the Pharisees], nevertheless most of them part from him in this matter, and follow the opinion of
5 a certain R. Judah Alfakhar,² who, in his desire to avoid Maimonides' error, fell into the opposite mistake.

1. Echoing Terence's *Eunuchus* I, 63 (ALM).

2. Judah Alfakhar (d. 1235), a doctor in the court of Ferdinand III of Castile, was one of the leaders of the Jewish community in Toledo, who opposed Maimonides' use of Greek philosophy to interpret Scripture. The letter Spinoza cites was addressed to David

[5] Alfakhar maintained^{3*} that reason should be the handmaid of Scripture and should be made completely subordinate to it. He did not think that anything in Scripture should be explained metaphorically merely because the literal meaning was contrary to reason, but only
 10 because it was contrary to Scripture itself, i.e., to its clear doctrines. From this he forms a universal rule: whatever Scripture teaches as doctrine,^{4**} and affirms in explicit terms, must be admitted unconditionally as true, simply in virtue of the authority of Scripture.⁵ No other doctrine will be found in the Bible which is directly contrary to it, though some may be found which are contrary to it by implica-
 15 tion. Scripture's ways of speaking often seem to presuppose something contrary to what it has explicitly taught. For that reason, only those passages [which seem contrary to Scripture's explicit teachings] are to be explained metaphorically.

Kimchi, a prominent thirteenth-century defender of Maimonides. For a translation of the letter and helpful background, see Adler 1996. Preus 1995 has argued persuasively that in criticizing "Alfakhar" Spinoza is really attacking certain contemporary opponents, orthodox Calvinists, whose views it was safer for Spinoza to discuss under the cover of representing them as the views of a Jewish philosopher.

3. *I remember having once read these doctrines in a Letter against Maimonides, included along with the Letters attributed to Maimonides. [The first two sentences of this paragraph fairly represent Alfakhar's position as articulated in the letter translated in Adler 1996, 151.]

4. **[ADN. XXVIII] See *Philosophy the Interpreter of Scripture*, p. 75. [This adnotation occurs only in Marchand's copy of the adnotations, and is probably his own note, not Spinoza's. See the discussion in the Editorial Preface to the TTP, p. 62, and Preus 1995. On that assumption, Marchand is calling attention to a similarity between Alfakhar's position, as articulated by Spinoza, and the position of an unnamed Calvinist opponent, as articulated by Meyer. The passage Marchand refers to occurs in Meyer 1666, 75 (Meyer 2005, 169–70). The letter of Alfakhar translated in Adler 1996 contains no such universal rule, and Adler has suggested (in personal correspondence, April 2015) that if Alfakhar had stated a rule, it would no doubt have been Rule 13 of Rabbi Ishmael: "When two passages [seem to] contradict each other, [they are to be elucidated by] a third passage that reconciles them" (Jonathan Sacks, *The Koren Siddur* [Jerusalem: Koren Publishers, 2009], 54). Adler observes that "these thirteen rules are found in the introduction to the *Sifra*, a midrash on the book of Leviticus. When he was still an observant Jew, Spinoza would have recited these rules every morning as part of the daily prayers. They are found, for example, in the prayer book *Seder Tefilot* (Amsterdam: Menasseh Ben Israel, 1626), p. 37b." Adler conjectures that Alfakhar is likely to have been a mask for Jacobus du Bois, a Calvinist preacher in Leiden. Whatever the identity of Meyer's opponent, Spinoza's characterization of this position seems to owe more to Meyer than it does to Alfakhar.]

5. As I translate *dogmatic*, Spinoza formulates the rule as applying only to things which Scripture teaches *as doctrine*, i.e., as propositions the faithful are required to believe. This would allow that statements which don't rise to the level of doctrine (the details of historical narratives, perhaps) don't fall under the rule. I see no such distinction in Alfakhar. Arguably the idea that Scripture teaches certain things as doctrines which must be accepted is "a very un-Jewish manner of speaking about scripture" (Preus 1995, 371–72). Nor does Alfakhar think Scripture never explicitly contradicts its teachings. He allows that there are several scriptural passages which contradict one another on the subject of God's corporeality.

[6] For example, Scripture teaches clearly that God is unique (see Deuteronomy 6:4), and you do not find any other passage, anywhere, directly affirming that there is more than one God.⁶ But there are
 20 numerous passages where God speaks of himself, and the Prophets speak of God, in the plural number.⁷ It's only this manner of speaking which presupposes that there is more than one God; it does not show that this was the speaker's intent. So all these passages are to be explained metaphorically—not because it's contrary to reason that there is more than one God, but because Scripture itself directly affirms that God is unique.

25 [7] Similarly, because Scripture (in Deuteronomy 4:15) directly affirms (as he thinks) that God is incorporeal,⁸ we are therefore bound to believe that God does not have a body—solely on the authority of this passage, not on the authority of reason. So, it's only by the authority of Scripture that we are bound to explain metaphorically all the pas-
 30 sages which attribute to God hands, feet, etc.⁹ [On this view] it is only a manner of speaking in these passages which seems to presuppose that God has a body.

[III/182] [8] That's the opinion of this author. Insofar as he wants to explain Scripture by Scripture, I praise him. But I'm amazed that a man endowed with reason should be so eager to destroy reason. It's certainly true that Scripture ought to be explained by Scripture, so long as we're only working out the meaning of the statements and the Prophets' intention. But once we've unearthed the true meaning, we must, necessarily, use judgment and reason to give it our assent. [9] If reason must still
 5 be made completely subordinate to Scripture, however much it may protest against it, I ask whether we ought to subordinate it with reason

6. Cf. ii, 36–40.

7. One passage where God apparently speaks of himself in the plural number would be Gen. 1:26, discussed by Manasseh 1842/1972, I, 13–15. An example of a passage where a prophet speaks of God in a way implying plurality might be Isa. 48:16, discussed by Manasseh, 1842/1972, II, 162–63. Malet suggests that Spinoza may have in mind those passages in which *Elohim* is used as the divine name with a plural verb. Grammatically, *Elohim* is plural, but normally it takes a singular verb, suggesting that in those passages the term was understood to be singular in meaning. Malet cites a number of exceptions to this rule, where the combination of *Elohim* with a plural verb raises doubts about the way the subject was understood. See Malet 1966, 231n.

8. Deut. 4:15–16 reads: “For your own sake, therefore, be most careful—since you saw no shape when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire—not to act wickedly and make for yourselves a sculptured image in any likeness whatever.” This is not one of the passages Alfakhar cites in his discussion of God's corporeality.

9. The subject of God's corporeality was a major topic in Maimonides' *Guide*, whose first seventy chapters provide many examples of the kind of passage referred to here. Some of these were previously discussed in ii, 42–43, where the subject is the related topic of God's visibility.

or without it, like blind men? If without reason, then of course we're acting foolishly and without judgment. If with reason, then we embrace Scripture only by the command of reason. We would not, therefore, embrace it if it were contrary to reason.

[10] I ask you, who can embrace something in his mind in spite of
 10 the protests of reason? What else is denying something in your mind but the fact that reason protests against it? I can find no words to express my amazement that people should want to make reason, [God's] greatest gift, a divine light, subordinate to dead letters—which men's wicked conduct could have corrupted—that it should be thought no crime to speak unworthily against the mind, the true original text of
 15 God's word, and to maintain that it is corrupt, blind, and lost, but that it should be considered the greatest crime to think such things about the letter, the image of God's word.¹⁰

[11] They think it pious to trust nothing to reason and their own judgment, but impious to doubt the good faith of those who handed down the Sacred Books to us. That's just folly, not piety. What are they
 20 worried about? What are they afraid of? Can't Religion and faith be defended unless men deliberately make themselves ignorant of everything, and say farewell to reason completely? If that's what they believe, they're more fearful for Scripture than trusting in it. [12] But it's far from true that Religion and piety want reason to be their handmaid, or that reason wants Religion to be its handmaid. Each can maintain
 25 control of its own domain with the utmost harmony. More on this shortly. First, I want to examine here the Rule of that Rabbi.

[13] As we've said, [Alfakhar] holds [i] that we're bound to accept as true whatever Scripture affirms, and reject as false whatever it denies; and [ii] that Scripture never explicitly affirms or denies anything con-
 30 trary to what it's affirmed or denied in another passage.¹¹ No one can fail to see how rash it is to say these things. [14] For—not to mention now that he hasn't paid attention to the fact that Scripture is made up of different books, written at different times, by different authors, for different men—or that he says these things on his own authority
 [III/183] (since reason and Scripture say nothing of the kind)— he ought to have shown that all the passages which are contrary to others only by implication can be suitably explained, from the nature of the language

10. Cf. the Preface, §§17 and 23. Spinoza's position in this paragraph seems to illustrate the position on the relation between will and intellect developed in E II P49S (and discussed in Curley 1975).

11. Alfakhar does not make the distinction Spinoza relies on here: between what Scripture says explicitly and what it says by implication.

and the purpose of the passage, as metaphors. And he ought also to have shown that Scripture has reached our hands uncorrupted.

[15] But let's examine the matter in an orderly way. About his first
 5 claim, [i], I ask: what if reason protests? are we still bound to accept as
 true what Scripture affirms and reject as false what it denies? Perhaps
 he will add that there is nothing in Scripture contrary to reason. But
 I insist that it explicitly affirms and teaches that God is jealous (e.g.,
 10 in the Decalogue itself [Exodus 20:5, Deuteronomy 5:9], in Exodus
 34:14,¹² in Deuteronomy 4:24, and in numerous other places).¹³ But
 this is contrary to reason. Still [by Alfakhar's principles] it must be
 asserted as true. Indeed, if certain passages are found in Scripture which
 presuppose that God is not jealous, they would have to be explained
 metaphorically, so that they did not seem to presuppose any such thing.

15 [16] Similarly, Scripture says explicitly that God came down upon
 mount Sinai (see Exodus 19:20),¹⁴ and attributes other local motions
 to him.¹⁵ Nowhere does it explicitly teach that God does not move. So
 everyone must admit that this too is true [i.e., that God moves from
 one place to another]. When Solomon says (1 Kings 8:27) that God is
 20 not contained in any place, since he has not explicitly maintained that
 God does not move, but it only follows from that that he doesn't, this
 will have to be explained in a way that does not seem to take local
 motion away from God.

[17] Similarly, the heavens would have to be taken as God's dwelling
 place and throne, because Scripture explicitly affirms this.¹⁶ And in this
 way a great many things said in accordance with the opinions of the
 25 Prophets and the common people—which only reason and Philosophy
 teach to be false, not Scripture—all these things would nevertheless
 have to be supposed to be true, according to the opinion of this author,
 because there is no consulting reason in these matters.

[18] Next, [Alfakhar] is just wrong when he claims that one passage
 is contrary to another only by implication, never directly. For Moses
 30 affirms directly that *God is a fire* (see Deuteronomy 4:24) and denies
 directly that God has any likeness to visible things (see Deuteronomy
 4:12).¹⁷ If he should reply that the latter passage does not deny directly
 that God is a fire, but only denies it by implication, and hence that the

12. Accepting V-L's (1914) emendation. The first edition, which Gebhardt follows, reads 4:14.

13. Maimonides gives numerous examples in the *Guide* I, 36.

14. Discussed in Manasseh 1842/1972, I, 152–53.

15. Maimonides' *Guide* discusses numerous examples (e.g., in I, 10, 12, 18, 21, etc.).

16. For examples of the kinds of passage at issue, see Maimonides, *Guide* I, 8, 9, 11.

17. Spinoza returns to the example discussed in vii, 18–22.

latter passage must be accommodated to the former—all right! Let us grant that God is a fire. Or rather, so as not to rave with him, let us
 [III/184] set these examples to one side and bring forward another.

[19] Samuel^{18**} directly denies that God repents of his judgment (see 1 Samuel 15:29), whereas Jeremiah, on the contrary, affirms that God repents of the good and of the evil which he had decreed (Jeremiah
 5 18:8–10). Are these passages not directly opposed to one another? Which of the two does he want to explain metaphorically? Each statement is universal and contrary to the other. What the one directly affirms, the other directly denies. So [Alfakhar] himself, according to his own rule, is bound to embrace as true what he is also bound to reject as false.

[20] Another point: what does it matter if one passage is not directly
 10 contrary to the other, but only contrary to the other by implication, if the principle of inference is clear and the circumstances and nature of the passage do not allow metaphorical explanations? There are a great many such passages in the Bible. See Ch. 2, where we showed that the Prophets had different and contrary opinions. See especially
 15 all the contradictions we showed in the Histories (see Chs. 9 and 10).

[21] I don't need to review all these matters here. What I've already said is enough to show the absurdities which follow from this position and rule, to show its falsity and its author's rashness.

So we've demolished Alfakhar's position as well as that of Maimonides.
 20 We've established, unshakably, that Theology is not bound to be the handmaid of reason, nor reason the handmaid of Theology, but that each rules its own domain. As we've said: reason's domain is truth and wisdom; Theology's is piety and obedience. [22] For as we've shown, the power of reason does not go so far as to enable it to determine
 25 that men can be blessed by obedience alone, without understanding things. But Theology teaches nothing but this, and does not command anything but obedience. It neither wills nor can do anything against reason. [23] For as we showed in the preceding chapter, it determines the doctrines of faith only so far as is sufficient for obedience. But pre-
 30 cisely how those doctrines are to be understood, with respect to their truth, it leaves to be determined by reason, which is really the light of the mind, without which it sees nothing but dreams and inventions.

18. **[ADN. XXIX] See *Philosophy the Interpreter of Holy Scripture*, p. 76. [March- and refers here to Meyer 1666 (Meyer 2005, 171–72). Meyer uses somewhat different examples to make the same point. E.g., he cites both 1 Sam. 15:29 and Num. 23:19 to illustrate Scripture's claim that God does not repent or change his mind, and Gen. 6:6 and Exod. 32:14 as examples of passages where God is said to do just that. He seems clearly to be aware that there are other passages he might have cited, e.g., Gen. 18:22–33; 1 Sam. 15:35; Jon. 3:9–10; Amos 7:3. The problem is discussed in Manasseh 1842/1972, I, 35–36, II, 200–201.]

[24] By Theology here I understand, in brief, revelation, insofar as it indicates the goal we said Scripture aims at: the principle and manner of obedience, *or* the doctrines of true piety and faith. This is what
 [III/185] is properly called the word of God. It does not consist in a certain number of books. On this see Ch. 12. For if you consider the precepts of Theology taken in this sense, *or* its teachings concerning life, you will find that it agrees with reason; if you consider its intent and end, you will find that it contains nothing contrary to reason. That's why
 5 it is common to everyone.

[25] As for the whole of Scripture in general, we've already shown in Ch. 7 that its meaning is to be determined only from its history, and not from the universal history of Nature, which is the foundation only of Philosophy. If, after we have discovered its true meaning
 10 in this way, we find that here or there it is contrary to reason, this should not give us any pause. For whatever we find in the Bible of this kind, whatever men can fail to know without detriment to their loving-kindness, we know with certainty does not touch Theology *or* the word of God. So anyone can think whatever he likes about these matters, without wickedness.¹⁹ We conclude, therefore, uncondition-
 15 ally, that Scripture is not to be accommodated to reason, nor reason to Scripture.

[26] Nevertheless, we cannot demonstrate by reason whether the foundation of Theology—that men are saved only by obedience—is true or false. So someone may raise against us too the objection: why then do we believe it? If we embrace it without reason, like blind men,
 20 then we too act foolishly and without judgment. [27] On the other hand, if we want to maintain that we can demonstrate this foundation rationally, then Theology will be a part of Philosophy, and ought not to be separated from it.

To this I reply that I maintain unconditionally that the natural light
 25 cannot discover this fundamental tenet of Theology—or at least that no one yet has demonstrated it. So revelation has been most necessary. Nevertheless, I maintain that we can use our judgment, so that we accept what has already been revealed with at least moral certainty. [28] I say with moral certainty, for we should not expect to be able to be more certain of it than the Prophets were. As we've already shown
 30 in Ch. 2 of this Treatise, those who first received the revelation had a certainty which was only moral.

19. So, for example, even though it's clear that Joshua believed that the sun moves around the earth (ii, 26), we are nonetheless free to accept a Copernican theory of the solar system.

[29] So those who try to show the authority of Scripture by mathematical demonstrations are completely misguided.²⁰ For the authority of the Bible depends on the authority of the Prophets. So it can't be [III/186] demonstrated by any stronger arguments than those the Prophets used long ago to persuade the people of their own authority. Indeed, our certainty about this can't have any other foundation than the one on which the Prophets founded their own certainty and authority.

[30] We've shown [ii, 4–10] that the whole certainty of the Prophets is based on three considerations:

- 5 (i) a distinct and vivid imagination,
- (ii) a Sign, and finally (and principally),
- (iii) a heart inclined toward the right and the good.

The certainty and authority the Prophets themselves had were not based on any other reasons. So they could not demonstrate their authority by any other reasons—not even to the people to whom they previously spoke orally, much less to us, to whom they now speak in writing.

10 [31] But the first consideration, that they imagined things vividly, could be established only for the Prophets [themselves]. So our whole certainty about revelation can and must be founded only on the other two considerations, the Sign and the Doctrine.

And indeed Moses too explicitly teaches this. [32] For in Deuteronomy 18[:15–22] he commands the people to obey the Prophet who 15 has given a true sign in the name of God, but to condemn him to death if he has predicted something falsely, even if [he made that prediction] in the name of God. He also commands them to condemn to death the Prophet who has tried to seduce the people away from true religion, even if he has confirmed his authority by signs and wonders. On this see Deuteronomy 13[:1–5].

[33] From this it follows that a true Prophet is distinguished from a false one by doctrine and miracle taken together. For Moses declares 20 a Prophet who satisfies these conditions to be a true one, and he commands the people to trust him without any fear of fraud. And he says that they are false Prophets, punishable by death, who have predicted something falsely, even if in the name of God, or who have taught false Gods, even if they have performed true miracles.

[34] So we too are bound to believe Scripture, i.e., the Prophets themselves, only for this reason, i.e., because of their teaching, confirmed

20. Giacotti (following Meli) suggests that Faustus Socinus is under attack here. His *De auctoritate S. Scripturae* (1580) defends the position Spinoza attacks. For an English translation of this work, see Socinus 1580.

25 by signs. Since we see that the Prophets commend Loving-kindness and Justice above all, and aim at nothing else, we conclude from this that they did not teach with an evil intent, but from a true heart, that men become blessed by obedience and faith. And because they confirmed this in addition with signs, we're persuaded that they did not say this
30 rashly, and were not insane when they were prophesying.

[35] In this we're even more confirmed when we pay attention to the fact that they taught no moral doctrine which does not agree fully with reason. It's no accident that the word of God in the Prophets agrees completely with the word of God speaking in us. We're as certain of these things from the Bible as the Jews once were when they inferred the same things from the living voice of the Prophets. [36] For we
[III/187] have shown above, toward the end of Ch. 12 [§§38–39], that, in its teaching and principal historical narratives, Scripture has reached our hands uncorrupted.

So even though this foundation of the whole of Theology and Scripture cannot be shown by a mathematical demonstration, we can
5 still embrace it with sound judgment. [37] For it's sheer stupidity to be unwilling to embrace what has been confirmed by so many testimonies of the Prophets—and what, moreover, is a great comfort to those whose powers of reason are not strong, what brings no slight advantage to the Republic, and what we can believe with absolutely no risk or
10 harm—merely because it can't be mathematically demonstrated. This would be as if, to organize our lives wisely, we should admit nothing as true which can be called in doubt by any reason for doubting, or as if most of our actions were not uncertain and full of risk.²¹

[38] I confess, of course, that people who think Philosophy and
15 Theology contradict one another, who therefore think that one or the other must be toppled from its throne, and that it's necessary to say goodbye to one or the other—these people have some reason to want to lay down firm foundations for Theology, and to try to demonstrate it mathematically. Who but someone desperate and mad would want to recklessly say goodbye to reason, or to scorn the arts and sciences,
20 and deny the certainty of reason?

[39] But we can't completely excuse them. They want to call upon reason to repudiate reason, and by a certain reason make reason uncertain. While they're trying to show the truth and authority of Theology
25 by mathematical demonstrations, and to take away the authority of reason and the natural light, all they're doing is dragging Theology under the

21. ALM note several allusions to Terence in this passage. Specifically, to *Phormio* I, 77; *Andria* I, 67; *Eunuchus* I, 61–63.

control of reason. They clearly seem to suppose that Theology has no brilliance unless it's illuminated by the natural light.

[40] On the other hand, if they boast that they trust completely in
 30 the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, and call reason to their aid only to convince nonbelievers, we can't trust what they say. For we can easily show that they say this either from the affects or from vain-glory.

[41] For from Chapter 14 it follows as clearly as can be that the Holy Spirit gives testimony only concerning good works. That's why even
 [III/188] Paul calls them the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Really, the Holy Spirit is nothing but a satisfaction which arises in the mind from good actions. [42] The only Spirit which gives testimony concerning the truth and certainty in speculative matters is reason.
 5 As we've already shown, only reason has laid claim to the domain of truth for itself. If anyone says he has a Spirit other than [reason] which makes him certain of the truth, he's making a false boast. He's speaking only from a prejudice stemming from his affects—or else he's fleeing for protection to sacred things, fearing that he'll be defeated by the
 10 Philosophers and exposed to public ridicule. But it won't work. What refuge can he make for himself if he commits treason against reason?

[43] But let's put these people to one side. I think I've said enough in defense of my cause. I've shown how Philosophy is to be separated from Theology, what each principally consists in, and that neither should be the handmaid of the other, but that each has charge of its own domain
 15 without any conflict with the other. Finally, when the opportunity presented itself, I've also shown the absurdities, disadvantages, and harms which have followed from the strange ways men have confused these two faculties, and have not known how to distinguish accurately between them, and to separate them from one another.

20 [44] Before I proceed to other things, I want to remind you—even though I've said this already^{22**}—that I judge the utility, even necessity, of Sacred Scripture, *or* revelation, to be very great. We can't perceive by the natural light that simple obedience is a path to salvation.^{23**} Only revelation teaches that this happens, by a special grace of God, which
 25 we cannot grasp by reason. It follows that Scripture has brought great comfort to mortals. [45] Everyone, without exception, can obey. But

22. **[ADN. XXX] See *Philosophy the Interpreter of Scripture*, p. 115. [Marchand refers again to Meyer 1666. In Meyer 2005 the page reference would be to 235–41].

23. **[ADN. XXXI] That is, revelation can teach that it's enough for salvation *or* blessedness to embrace the divine decrees as laws *or* commands, and that it's not necessary to conceive them as eternal truths. Reason can't teach this. This is evident from what was demonstrated in Ch. 4. [The "extra text" Gebhardt adds to this note from the version in Saint-Glain seems to reflect just a (trivially) different way of translating the Latin rather than a genuinely alternative text.]

only a very few (compared with the whole human race) acquire a habit of virtue from the guidance of reason alone. So, if we didn't have this testimony of Scripture, we would doubt nearly everyone's salvation.

[III/189]

CHAPTER XVI

*On the Foundations of the Republic;
on the natural and civil right of each person;
and on the Right of the Supreme 'Powers*

[1] So far we've taken care to separate Philosophy from Theology and
5 to show the freedom of philosophizing which [Theology]¹ grants to
everyone. Now it's time for us to ask how far this freedom of thought,
and of saying what you think, extends in the best Republic. To examine
this in an orderly way, we must discuss the foundations of the Republic,
10 and first, the natural right of each person, without attending yet to the
Republic or to Religion.

[2] By the right and established practice of nature I mean nothing
but the rules of the nature of each individual, according to which we
conceive each thing to be naturally determined to existing and having
15 effects in a certain way. For example, fish are determined by nature
to swimming, and the large ones to eating the smaller. So it is by the
supreme right of nature that fish are masters of the water, and that the
large ones eat the smaller.

[3] For it's certain that nature, considered absolutely, has the supreme
right to do everything it can, i.e., that the right of nature extends as far
20 as its power does. For the power of nature is the power of God itself,
and he has the supreme right over all things.² [4] But the universal
power of the whole of nature is nothing but the power of all individu-
als together. From this it follows that each individual has a supreme
right to do everything it can, *or* that the right of each thing extends
25 as far as its determinate power does. Now the supreme law of nature
is that each thing strives to persevere in its state, as far as it can by its

1. Spinoza has a demonstrative pronoun here (*haec*, this). Some translators have taken *haec* to refer to the separation between philosophy and theology; but most take it to refer to theology. Ch. xiv, 39, supports that interpretation.

2. In ii, 38, Spinoza had made God's supreme right over all things a central point of Mosaic theology, deriving it from his creative activity. Here the Mosaic idea is combined with one which goes back to Pliny, that the power of God and the power of nature are identical. Cf. i, 44; iii, 9; and vi, 9.

own power, and does this, not on account of anything else, but only of itself. From this it follows that each individual has the supreme right to do this, i.e. (as I have said), to exist and have effects as it is
 30 naturally determined to do.³

[5] Nor do we recognize here any difference between men and other individuals in nature, nor between men endowed with reason and those others who are ignorant of true reason, nor between fools and mad-
 [III/190] men, and those who are sensible and sane. For whatever each thing does according to the laws of its nature, it does with supreme right, because it acts as it has been determined to do according to nature, and cannot do otherwise.

[6] So among men who are considered as living only under the rule of nature, one who does not yet know reason, or does not yet have a
 5 habit of virtue, has a supreme right to live according to the laws of appetite alone—just as much as one who guides his life according to the laws of reason. I.e., just as the wise man has the supreme right to do everything which reason dictates, *or* to live according to the laws of reason, so also the ignorant and weak-minded have the supreme right to do everything appetite urges, *or* to live according to the laws
 10 of appetite. This is just what Paul teaches, when he recognizes no sin before the law,⁴ i.e., so long as men are considered as living only according to the rule of nature.

[7] The natural right of each man is determined not by sound reason, but by desire and power. For not all men are naturally determined to
 15 operate according to the rules and laws of reason. On the contrary, everyone is born ignorant of everything. Before men can know the true principle of living and acquire a virtuous disposition, much of their life has passed, even if they have been well brought up. Meanwhile, they are bound to live, and to preserve themselves, as far as they can by
 20 their own power, i.e., by the prompting of appetite alone. Nature has given them nothing else. It has denied them the actual power to live according to sound reason. So they're no more bound to live according to the laws of a sound mind than a cat is bound to live according to the laws of a lion's nature.

3. Cf. Hobbes, DCv I, 7–10.

4. At III/54/14–15 Spinoza had cited Rom. 4:15—“where there is no law, there is no violation”—in support of attributing to Paul the idea that there is no sin without a commandment and a law. Perhaps Rom. 5:13 would have been clearer support for Spinoza's view: “sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned where there is no law.” I take this to mean that the appetites and actions the law subsequently condemned as sinful existed prior to the promulgation of the law, but that those appetites were not genuinely sinful until there was a law which prohibited them. That seems consistent with Spinoza's position here.

[8] Whatever anyone who is considered to be only under the rule
 25 of nature judges to be useful for himself—whether under the guidance
 of sound reason or by the prompting of the affects—he is permitted,
 by supreme natural right, to want and to take—by force, by deception,
 by entreaties, or by whatever way is, in the end, easiest. Consequently,
 he is permitted to regard as an enemy anyone who wants to prevent
 him from doing what he intends to do.

30 [9] From these considerations it follows that the Right and Estab-
 lished Practice of nature, under which all are born and for the most
 part live, prohibits nothing except what no one desires and what no one
 can do: not disputes, not hatreds, not anger, not deception. Without
 qualification, it is not averse to anything appetite urges.

[10] This is not surprising. Nature is not constrained by the laws of
 [III/191] human reason, which aim only at man's true advantage and preservation.
 It is governed by infinite other laws, which look to the eternal order of
 the whole of nature, of which man is only a small part. It is only by the
 necessity of this order that all individuals are determined to exist and
 have effects in a definite way. [11] So when anything in nature seems
 5 to us ridiculous, absurd, or evil, that's because we know things only in
 part, and for the most part are ignorant of the order and coherence of
 the whole of nature, and because we want everything to be directed
 according to the usage of our reason—even though what reason says is
 evil is not evil in relation to the order and laws of nature as a whole,
 10 but only in relation to the laws of our nature.⁵

[12] Still, no one can doubt how much more advantageous it is to
 man to live according to the laws and certain dictates of our reason.
 As we've said, these laws and dictates aim only at the true advantage
 of men. There's no one who does not desire to live securely, and as
 15 far as possible, without fear. But this simply can't happen so long as
 everyone is permitted to do whatever he likes, and reason is granted
 no more right than hatred and anger. [13] There is no one who
 lives among hostilities, hatreds, anger and deceptions, who does not
 live anxiously, and who does not strive to avoid these things, as far
 as he can.

Also (as we showed in Ch. 5 [§§18–20]), if we consider that without
 20 mutual aid men must live most wretchedly and without any cultivation
 of reason, we shall see very clearly that to live, not only securely, but
 very well, men had to agree in having one purpose. So they brought
 it about that they would have collectively the natural right each one
 had to all things. It would no longer be determined according to the

5. §§10–11 will be repeated in the TP, ii, 8.

25 force and appetite of each one, but according to the power and will of everyone together.

[14] Nevertheless, they would have tried this in vain if they wanted to follow only what appetite urges. For according to the laws of appetite each person is drawn in a different direction. So they had to make a
30 very firm resolution and contract to direct everything only according to the dictate of reason. No one dares to be openly contrary to that, for fear of seeming mindless. They had to agree to rein in their appetites, insofar as those appetites urge something harmful to someone else, to do nothing to anyone which they would not want done to themselves, and finally, to defend another person's right as if it were their own.

[15] And now we cannot fail to see how they had to enter into this contract, to make it valid and lasting. For it's a universal law of human nature that no one neglects to pursue what he judges to be good, unless
[III/192] he hopes for a greater good, or fears a greater harm. Nor does anyone submit to any evil, except to avoid a greater one, or because he hopes for a greater good. Between two goods, each person chooses the one he judges to be greater; between two evils, the one which seems to him lesser.

I say explicitly: the one which *seems* to the person choosing to be
5 greater or lesser. It does not follow that things must be as he judges them to be. [16] This law is so firmly inscribed in human nature, that it ought to be numbered among the eternal truths, which no one can fail to know.

From this it follows necessarily that no one will promise to give up the right he has to all things except with intent to deceive,^{6**} and that
10 absolutely no one will stand by his promises unless he fears a greater evil or hopes for a greater good. [17] To understand this better, suppose a Robber forces me to promise him that I'll give him my goods when he wishes.⁷ Since, as I've already shown, my natural right is determined only by my power, it's certain that if I can free myself from this Robber
15 by deceptively promising him whatever he wishes, I'm permitted to do this by natural right, to contract deceptively for whatever he wishes.

[18] Or suppose that without intent to deceive I've promised someone that for twenty days I won't taste food, or any nourishment at all, and

6. **[ADN. XXXII] In the civil state, where there is a common law which decides what is good and what is evil, we rightly distinguish between a good and an evil intent to deceive. But in the state of nature, where everyone is his own judge, and has the supreme right to prescribe and interpret laws for himself, indeed, even to disregard them, as he judges it to be more advantageous for himself, there it cannot be conceived that anyone acts in bad faith.

7. Spinoza's position here contrasts interestingly with that of Hobbes (cf. DCv ii, 16; *Leviathan* xiv, 27). See also Grotius, *De jure belli* III, xix.

that afterward I see that this promise was foolish, that I can't keep it without very great injury. Since, by natural law, I'm bound to choose
 20 the lesser of two evils,⁸ I can, with supreme right, break faith with such a contract, and treat what I have said as if I hadn't said it. [19] And I say that natural right permits this, whether I see by a true and certain reason that I made a bad promise, or merely seem to see this by opinion. For whether I see this truly or falsely, I shall fear a very great evil, and according to the established practice of nature, strive to avoid it in every way.

25 [20] From these considerations we conclude that a contract can have no force except by reason of its utility.⁹ If the utility is taken away, the contract is taken away with it, and remains null and void. For that reason it's foolish to demand of someone that he keep faith with you forever, unless you try at the same time to bring it about that breaking the contract you're entering into brings more harm than utility to the one who breaks it.

30 This is especially applicable to the institution of the Republic. [21] If all men could easily be led just by the guidance of reason, and could recognize the supreme utility and necessity of the Republic, there would be no one who would not absolutely detest deceptions. With the utmost good faith, everyone would stand by their contracts completely, out of a desire for this supreme good, the preservation of the Republic. Above
 [III/193] all else, they would maintain trust, the chief protection of the Republic.

[22] But it's far from true that everyone can always be easily led just by the guidance of reason. Everyone is drawn by his own pleasure.¹⁰ Most of the time the mind is so filled with greed, love of esteem, envy, anger, etc., that there's no room for reason. [23] That's why, though men
 5 may promise with definite signs of an ingenuous intention, and contract to maintain trust, still, no one can be certain of another's good faith unless something else is added to the promise.¹¹ For by natural right each person can act deceptively, and is bound to stand by the contract only by the hope of a greater good or the fear of a greater evil.

8. "Natural law" here translates *jus naturale*, a phrase discussed in the Glossary under LAW, RIGHT, where this passage is cited as illustrating an apparently prescriptive use of *jus naturale*. Also relevant, the Glossary entry BOUND. But in the first sentence of the next section *jus naturale* is translated "natural right."

9. Wernham suggests that reflection on this conclusion may have helped convince Spinoza that the contract was superfluous. Perhaps this is why there is less emphasis on a contract in the TP.

10. An allusion to Virgil's *Eclogues* ii, 65 (ALM).

11. Wernham cites Hobbes, DCv v, 4–5. Those who think Spinoza has read some version of *Leviathan* might think xvii, 2, of that work also relevant. What must be added to the promise is the probability of punishment for breaking it. "Covenants without the sword are but words, and of no strength to secure a man at all."

[24] Because we've already shown that [each person's] natural right is
 10 determined only by his power, it follows that as much of his power as
 he transfers to another, whether because he's forced to, or voluntarily,
 so much of his right does he also necessarily give up to the other
 person. It follows also that if a person has the supreme 'power, which
 enables him to compel everyone by force, and restrain them by fear of
 15 the supreme punishment (which everyone, without exception, fears),¹²
 then that person has the supreme right over everyone. He will retain
 this right just so long as he preserves this power of doing whatever he
 wishes. Otherwise he will command by entreaty; no one stronger will
 be bound to obey him unless he wishes to.

[25] This, then, is the way

20 [i] a social order can be formed consistently with natural right, and

[ii] every contract can always be preserved with the utmost good faith—

if each person transfers all the power he has to the social order, which
 alone will retain the supreme right of nature over all things. That is, the
 social order alone will have sovereignty, and each person will be bound
 to obey it, either freely, or from fear of the supreme punishment. [26]
 25 The right of such a social order is called Democracy. This is defined,
 then, as a general assembly of men which has, as a body, the supreme
 right over everything in its power.

From this it follows that no law binds the supreme 'power. Everyone
 must obey it in everything. For everyone had to agree to this, either
 tacitly or explicitly, when they transferred to the supreme 'power all
 30 their power to defend themselves, i.e., all their right. [27] If they
 wished to keep anything for themselves, they ought at the same time
 to have taken care that they could defend it safely. Since they did not
 do that—and could not do it without dividing, and thereby destroying,
 the sovereignty¹³—by this act they submitted themselves absolutely to
 the will of the supreme 'power. Since they did this unconditionally,
 [III/194] and (as we've already shown) were both compelled to it by necessity
 and urged to it by reason, it follows that unless we want to be enemies
 of the state, and act contrary to reason, which urges us to defend the
 state with all our powers, we're bound to carry out absolutely all the
 commands of the supreme 'power—even if it commands the greatest

12. It seems to have been quite traditional to make the right to inflict the death penalty one of the essential marks of sovereignty. Cf. Grotius, *De jure belli* I, iii, 6; Hobbes, DCv ii, 18; Pufendorf, *De jure naturae* VIII, iii, 1; Locke, *Two Treatises* II, 1.

13. I take it that Spinoza here assumes the logic of the argument of Hobbes and Bodin, that sovereignty is indivisible. Cf. DCv vi, 6–11; *Leviathan* xviii, 16.

absurdities. For reason commands that we carry out even those orders,
 5 so as to choose the lesser of two evils.

[28] Moreover, everyone was easily able to run the risk of submitting himself absolutely to the command and will of another. For as we've shown, this right of commanding whatever they wish belongs to the supreme 'powers only so long as they really have the supreme 'power.
 10 If they should lose [that 'power], they also lose, at the same time, the right of commanding all things. [The right] falls to him or those who have acquired it and can retain it.

[29] So only very rarely can it happen that the supreme 'powers command great absurdities. To look out for their own interests and retain their sovereignty, it is incumbent on them most of all to consult
 15 the common good, and to direct everything according to the dictate of reason. As Seneca says,¹⁴ no one continues a violent rule for long.

[30] To this we may add that in a democratic state, absurdities are less to be feared. If the assembly is large, it's almost impossible that the majority of its members should agree on one absurd action.¹⁵ Again,
 20 as we've also shown, its foundation and end are precisely to avoid the absurdities of appetite, and to confine men within the limits of reason, as far as possible, so that they may live harmoniously and peacefully. If this foundation is removed, the whole structure will easily fall. [31] It's incumbent only on the supreme 'power, then, to provide for these things, and on the subjects, as we have said, to carry out its commands,
 25 and not to recognize any other right than that which the supreme 'power declares to be right.

[32] Perhaps someone will think that in this way we make subjects slaves, because he thinks someone who acts according to a command is a slave, whereas someone who governs his conduct according to his own heart is a free man.

But this is not absolutely true. Really, the person who is drawn by his
 30 own pleasure, and can neither see nor do anything useful to himself, is most a slave. The only free person is the one who lives wholeheartedly according to the guidance of reason alone.

[33] An action done on a command—obedience—does, in some measure, take away freedom. But that isn't what makes the slave. It's the reason for the action. If the end of the action is not the advantage of the agent himself, but of the person who issues the command, then the agent is a slave, useless to himself. [34] But in a Republic, and a state

14. *Troades* 258, previously cited in v, 22 (ALM).

15. Like Machiavelli (*Discourses* I, 54), Spinoza believes in the wisdom of crowds. Cf. TP vii, 5.

[III/195] where the supreme law is the well-being of the whole people, not that of the ruler,¹⁶ someone who obeys the supreme 'power in everything should not be called a slave, useless to himself, but a subject.

So that Republic is most free whose laws are founded on sound reason. For there each person, when he wishes, can be free,^{17**} i.e., live wholeheartedly according to the guidance of reason. [35] Similarly, even though children are bound to obey all the commands of their parents, they are still not slaves. For their parents' commands are primarily concerned with the advantage of the children.

We recognize a great difference, then, between a slave, a son, and a subject. We define these as follows:

10 a *slave* is someone who is bound to obey the commands of a master, which are concerned only with the advantage of the person issuing the command;

a *son* is someone who does what is advantageous for himself, in accordance with a parent's command; and

a *subject*, finally, is someone who does what is advantageous for the collective body—and hence, also for himself—in accordance with the command of the supreme 'power.

15 [36] With this I think I have shown sufficiently clearly what the foundations of the democratic state are. I preferred to treat it before all others, because it seemed the most natural state, and the one which approached most nearly the freedom nature concedes to everyone. In it no one so transfers his natural right to another that in the future there is no consultation with him. Instead he transfers it to the greater part
20 of the whole Society, of which he makes one part. In this way everyone remains equal, as they were before, in the state of nature.

[37] Again, I wanted to treat in detail only this state because it was most suitable for my purpose, since I had decided to discuss the utility of freedom in a Republic. I pass over the foundations of the other

16. An allusion to Cicero, *De legibus* III, 3: *salus populi suprema lex esto* (ALM).

17. **[ADN. XXXIII] No matter what state a man is in, he can be free. For certainly a man is free just insofar as he is led by reason. But (contrary to Hobbes) reason urges peace in all circumstances; moreover, peace cannot be obtained unless the common laws of the state are maintained without infringement. So the more a man is led by reason, i.e., the more he is free, the more will he steadfastly maintain the state's laws and carry out the commands of the supreme 'power to which he is subject. [Laird (1934, 300) criticized Spinoza's grasp of Hobbes in this note. But Spinoza's comment does say something contrary to what Hobbes says in DCv ii, 2, where the first law of nature is "to seek peace where it can be had, and where it cannot, to seek the helps of war." In *Leviathan* Hobbes' position is different, but still contrary to Spinoza's. The first law is to seek peace, "as far as he has hope of attaining it," but when it cannot be obtained, the right of nature permits him "to seek and use all the helps and advantages of war" (xiv, 4).]

forms of 'power. For us to recognize their right, it's not necessary now
 25 to know what their origin is or how they often arise. That's established
 more than clearly enough by what we have just shown. [38] For who-
 ever has the supreme 'power, whether it's one person, or a few, or
 everyone, it's certain that he possesses the supreme right to command
 whatever he wishes. Moreover, it's certain that whoever has transferred
 his 'power to defend himself to another, whether voluntarily or because
 30 compelled by force, has completely yielded him his natural right, and
 consequently has decided to obey him in absolutely everything. He is
 bound to make good this decision so long as the King, or the Nobles,
 or the People, keep the supreme 'power they received, which was the
 basis of the transfer of right. I need add no more.

[III/196] [39] Now that we have shown what the foundations and right of the
 state are, it will be easy to determine what private civil right, injury,
 justice and injustice are in the civil state; and again, who is an ally, who
 an enemy, and what the crime of treason is.

[40]¹⁸ By *private civil right* we can understand nothing but the freedom
 5 each person has to preserve himself in his state, which is determined by
 the edicts of the supreme 'power, and is defended only by its authority.
 For after each person has transferred his right to live according to his
 own good pleasure, a right which used to be limited only by his own
 'power—that is, has transferred to another his freedom and power to
 defend himself—he is bound to live now solely by that other's reason,
 10 and to defend himself solely by its protection.

[41] An *injury* occurs when a citizen or subject is forced to suffer a
 harm from someone else, contrary to the civil law, *or* to an edict of the
 supreme 'power. For an injury cannot be conceived except in a civil state;
 and the supreme 'powers (to whom, by right, all things are permitted)
 cannot do an injury to their subjects. An injury can occur only among
 15 private persons who are bound by law not to harm one another.

[42] *Justice* is a constancy of mind in apportioning to each person
 what belongs to him according to civil law. *Injustice* is taking away from
 someone, under the pretext of right, what belongs to him according to
 the true interpretation of the laws. Justice and injustice are also called
 equity and inequity, because those who are established to settle disputes
 20 are bound to have no regard for persons, but to treat everyone as equals,
 and to defend the right of each person equally, without envying the
 rich, or disdaining the poor.

[43] *Allies* are men of two states, which, to avoid the danger of war,
 or to gain some other advantage, contract with one another not to harm

18. Reading *quod* for *quo* in Gebhardt l. 7, and *se defendere* for *defendere* in l. 10. (ALM)

25 one another, but to come to one another's aid when in need, though each retains its own sovereignty. [44] This contract will be valid just as long as its foundation, the principle of danger, *or* of advantage, is present. For no one makes a contract or is bound to stand by a contract, except out of hope for some good, or anxiety about some evil. If
30 this foundation should be removed, the contract is removed of itself.

Experience also teaches this, as clearly as one could wish. [45] For though two different states may contract with one another not to harm one another, they still strive, as far as they can, to prevent the other from becoming too powerful. And they don't trust what's been said, unless they've seen clearly enough the end and advantage for which
[III/197] each one contracts. Otherwise, they fear deception, and not without just cause. For who trusts what someone else has said and promised, when the other person continues to have the supreme 'power and right to do whatever he pleases, and is someone whose supreme law must be the well-being and advantage of his state? Who but a fool, who does not know the right the supreme 'powers have?

[46] Moreover, if we attend to piety and religion, we'll see that when
5 keeping a promise would be harmful to his state, no ruler can stand by his promises without wickedness. If he sees that a promise he's made is harmful to his state, he can't keep that promise without breaking the promise he made to his subjects, a promise which binds him most firmly, a promise rulers usually undertake most sacredly to honor.

[47] Next, an *enemy* is whoever lives outside the state without recognizing the state's sovereignty, either as an ally or as a subject. For it's
10 not hatred which makes an enemy of the state, but right. The state's right against whoever does not recognize its sovereignty by any kind of contract is the same as its right against someone who's done it harm. Indeed, it can rightly compel him, in whatever way it can, either to surrender or to become an ally.

15 [48] Finally, the crime of *treason* can be committed only by subjects *or* citizens, who have transferred all their right to the state, either by a tacit or by an explicit contract. A subject is said to have committed this crime if he has tried in any way to seize the right of the supreme 'power, *or* to transfer it to another.

20 [49] I say "has tried," because if they were not to be condemned until after the deed had been done, for the most part the state would try this too late, after its right had been seized or transferred to another.¹⁹ I say one who tries "in any way" to seize the right of the supreme 'power, without qualification, because I make no distinction between cases where

19. A bit of political wisdom which Akkerman traces to Sallust's *War with Catiline* lii.

the attempt would clearly harm the whole Republic and those where it would clearly benefit the whole Republic. [50] However [the traitor] tried to do this, he's committed treason and is rightly condemned.

Everyone acknowledges that in war this is done with the most valid right. If someone doesn't maintain his station, but attacks the enemy without his commander's knowledge—even if he's done it with a good plan, and driven the enemy back—so long as he was acting merely on his own initiative, he's still rightly condemned to death, because he's violated his oath and the commander's right.²⁰

[51] But not everyone sees equally clearly that all citizens, without exception, are always bound by this same law, though the reason for it is exactly the same. For the Republic must be preserved and directed by the policy of the supreme 'power alone, and the citizens have agreed unconditionally that this right belongs only to the supreme 'power. So if any citizen has undertaken to carry out any public business solely [III/198] by his own decision, without the supreme council's knowledge, he's violated the right of the supreme 'power, has committed treason, and is rightly condemned. As we've said [xvi, 49], it doesn't matter how much advantage this would certainly bring to the state.

[52] To remove any misgiving, it remains now for us to answer this question: isn't it plainly contrary to the revealed divine law to maintain, as we have above [xvi, 6], that anyone in the state of nature who doesn't have the use of reason lives, by the supreme right of nature, according to the laws of appetite? For since everyone is equally bound by the divine command—unconditionally, whether they have the use of reason or not—to love his neighbor as himself, we can't bring harm to another person, and live by the laws of appetite alone, without a violation of right.

[53] We can easily reply to this objection if only we attend to the state of nature. For it's prior, both in nature and in time, to religion. No one knows, by nature,^{21**} that he's bound to obey God. This knowledge

20. Spinoza is apparently thinking here of the case of Manlius Torquatus, cited below in xix, 23.

21. **[ADN. XXXIV] When Paul says [Rom. 1:20] that men are without escape, he's speaking in a human manner. For in ch. 9 [Saint-Glavin: v. 18] of the same Letter he explicitly teaches that God has mercy on those on whom he will have mercy, and hardens those he will harden, and that men are inexcusable, not because they've been forewarned, but only because they're in God's power as the clay is in the power of the potter, who makes, of the same mass, one vessel for honorable purposes, another for dishonorable ones.

As for natural divine law, whose chief precept we've said is to love God [iv, 12–14, 21], I've called it a law in the same sense philosophers call laws the common rules of nature, according to which all things happen. For the love of God is not obedience, but a virtue which is necessarily in the man who rightly knows God. Obedience is concerned

15 is something he can't acquire by reason at all, but only by revelation, confirmed by signs. [54] So before revelation no one is bound by a divine law he can't help but not know. We mustn't confuse the state of nature with the state of religion, but must conceive it as being without religion or law, and hence without sin or violations of right. We've already done this,²² confirming our conception by the authority of Paul.

20 [55] It's not only because no one knows the divine law in a state of nature that we conceive that state as being prior to revealed divine law, and without such a law. It's also because everyone is born in freedom. If, according to nature, all men were bound by divine law, or if the divine law were a law by nature, it would've been superfluous for God
25 to enter into a contract with men and to bind them by an agreement and an oath.²³ [56] So we must grant, without qualification, that divine law began when, in an explicit agreement, men promised God to obey him in everything. By this they, as it were, surrendered their natural freedom, and transferred their right to God, as we've said happens in the civil state. But I'll treat these matters in more detail later.

30 [57] Someone may still insist that the supreme 'powers are bound by this divine law just as much as subjects are. We've said, on the contrary, that they retain their natural right, and that by right everything is permitted to them.

This whole difficulty arises not so much because of the state of nature as because of the right of nature. To remove it I say that in the state of nature each person is bound by revealed law in the same
[III/199] way he's bound to live according to the dictates of sound reason: it's more advantageous to him and necessary for his salvation. If he doesn't

with the will of the one commanding, not with the necessity and truth of the matter. Moreover, since we're ignorant of the nature of God's will, and on the other hand, know with certainty that whatever happens, happens only by God's power, it's only by revelation that we can know whether God wills that men should worship him with some honor, as they would a prince.

Moreover, we've shown that the divine laws seem to us to be laws, *or* things instituted, just as long as we do not know their cause. But when this is known, they thereby cease to be laws, and we embrace them not as laws, but as eternal truths. That is, obedience passes into love, which proceeds from true knowledge as necessarily as light does from the sun.

So under the guidance of reason we can love God, but not obey him. For we cannot embrace the divine laws as divine so long as we are ignorant of their cause; and we cannot, by reason, conceive God as establishing those laws like a prince.

22. The reference is apparently to xvi, 6, where Spinoza seems to interpret Paul's teaching differently than he had in iv, 47–50. I take it that ADN. XXXIV is intended to address this *prima facie* inconsistency by recommending a reading of Rom. 1:20 which removes its endorsement of traditional natural law.

23. The issue raised in this section also arises in Hobbes. The covenantal theology of the Pentateuch is not easy to reconcile with the conception of God's sovereignty in the book of Job. I've explored these issues in Curley 2002 and 2004.

want to do this, he's permitted to act at his own risk. [58] So he's only bound to live according to his own decision, not anyone else's, and isn't bound to recognize any mortal as his judge, or as by right the defender of religion.

5 I say that the supreme 'power has retained this right. It can, indeed, consult men, but it is not bound to recognize anyone as a judge, nor any mortal other than itself as a defender of any right, except a Prophet, whom God has expressly sent, and who has shown this by indubitable signs. [59] And not even then is he compelled to recognize the man as judge, but only God himself.²⁴

10 But if the supreme 'power doesn't wish to obey the God revealed in his law, he may do this at his own risk and to his own loss, without any conflict with either civil or natural law. For the civil law depends only on his own decree. [60] And the natural law depends on the laws of nature, which are accommodated, not to Religion (which aims only at what is useful to man), but to the order of the whole of nature, i.e.,
15 to the eternal decree of God, which is unknown to us. Some people seem to have had a conception of this, though rather obscurely, when they maintained that man can, indeed, sin against the revealed will of God, but not against his eternal decree, by which he predetermined all things.²⁵

[61] But suppose someone were now to ask: what if the supreme
20 'power commands something contrary to religion and to the obedience we've promised to God in an explicit covenant? Must we obey the divine or the human command?²⁶

I'll discuss these matters in more detail later. Here I'll only say briefly that, when we have a certain and undoubted revelation, we must obey God above all others. [62] But as experience testifies only
25 too well, men are apt to make great mistakes in matters of religion, and to compete vigorously in inventing many things, according to the differences in their mentality. So it's certain that if no one were bound by law to obey the supreme 'power in the things he thought pertained to religion, then the right of the state would depend on the

24. Like Hobbes, Spinoza is concerned to rule out the possibility that private citizens might seek to challenge the authority of the sovereign because they have a higher obligation to God. Cf. *Leviathan* xxxi, 1; xxxiii, 1; xliii, 1; and the comment on these passages in the preface to my edition of *Leviathan*, xli-xliv. For a recent and useful treatment of the Erastian tradition in early modern political theory, see Nelson 2010.

25. Cf. Thomas (Aquinas ST I-II, cix-cxiv) and Grotius (*De jure belli* I, i, 10, §2) (Giancotti).

26. A version of the question raised classically in Acts 5:29, where the answer is that we must obey God rather than man. The question is also central for Hobbes. See my introduction to his *Leviathan*, xli-xliv.

varying judgment and affect of each person. [63] For no one would
 30 be bound by a statute which he judged was contrary to his faith and
 superstition. So under this pretext everyone could assume a license
 to do anything.

In this way, the right of the state would be completely violated. From
 this it follows that the supreme 'power, which, both by divine and by
 natural law, has the sole responsibility of preserving and protecting
 the rights of the state, has the supreme right to maintain whatever it
 [III/200] judges concerning religion. Everyone is bound to obey its decrees and
 commands about this matter, according to the assurance they've given
 to it, which God commands them to honor in every case.²⁷

[64] But if those who have the sovereignty are Pagans, we should
 not enter into any contracts with them, but should resolve to suffer
 the greatest distress rather than transfer our right to them. And if
 5 we have entered into a contract, and transferred our right to them,
 since we have thereby deprived ourselves of the right of defending
 ourselves and our religion, we are bound to obey them, and to keep
 faith, or to be forced to do that—unless by a certain revelation God
 has promised his special aid against a Tyrant or specifically willed
 an exception.

10 [65] So we see that of all the Jews who were in Babylon, only three
 young men, who did not doubt God's aid, were unwilling to obey
 Nebuchadnezzar [Daniel 3:12]. But with the further exception of Dan-
 iel, whom the King himself revered [Daniel 6:15], the rest no doubt
 obeyed, when they were compelled by the law, perhaps reflecting in
 their heart that it was in accordance with God's decree that they had
 been delivered to the King, and that the King held his sovereignty and
 preserved it by God's guidance.

15 [66] On the other hand, Eleazar [2 Maccabees 6:18–31], while his
 Country was still standing as best it could, wanted to give his people
 an example of constancy, so that his followers would be prepared to
 bear anything rather than allow their right and 'power to be transferred
 to the Greeks, and would undergo anything so as not to be forced to
 swear loyalty to the Gentiles.

This is also confirmed by daily experience. [67] For those who rule
 20 as Christian sovereigns do not hesitate, for the sake of their greater
 security, to conclude treaties with the Turks and Pagans, and to com-
 mand their subjects, who go to live among them, not to assume a
 greater freedom in their practices, whether secular or religious, than

27. Perhaps we have an allusion here to Rom. 13:1–7, a text prominently cited as
 authorizing (unconditional) obedience to the state.

they have explicitly agreed to or than that state has granted. This is
 25 evident from the agreement of the Dutch with the Japanese, which we
 have previously spoken about [v, 33].

[III/201]

CHAPTER XVII

*That no one can or need transfer everything
 to the Supreme 'Power; on the Hebrew Republic
 during the life of Moses, and after his death,
 before they elected Kings; on its excellence;
 why it could perish, and could hardly
 survive without rebellions*

[1] In the last Chapter we considered the right the supreme 'powers
 10 have to do everything, and the natural right each person has transferred
 to them. Though the view expressed there agrees in no small measure
 with practice, and a practice could be established which approached
 more and more closely to the condition we described, still, it will
 never happen that this view does not remain, in many respects, merely
 theoretical.

[2] No one will ever be able to transfer to another his power, or
 15 consequently, his right, in such a way that he ceases to be a man. And
 there will never be a supreme 'power who can get everything to hap-
 pen just as he wishes. The supreme 'power would act in vain if he
 commanded a subject to hate someone who had joined the subject to
 himself by a benefit, or to love someone who had harmed him, or not
 20 to be offended by insults, or not to desire to be freed from fear, and
 many other things of this kind, which necessarily follow from the laws
 of human nature.

[3] I think experience also teaches this very clearly. Men have never
 surrendered their right and transferred their power to another in such
 a way that the people who received the right and power from them
 did not fear them, and that the state was not in greater danger from
 25 its own citizens than from its enemies (even though those citizens had
 deprived themselves of their right).^{1**}

1. **[ADN. XXXV] Two common soldiers undertook to transfer the rule of the
 Roman people, and they succeeded. See Tacitus, *Histories*, I. [*Histories* I, xxv, also cited
 at TP vii, 14. See also TP vi, 6. ALM call attention to a similar passage in Machiavelli,

[4] Admittedly, if men could be so deprived of their natural right that subsequently they could do nothing, except by the will of those who held the supreme Right, then the latter would be permitted to reign over their subjects most violently and with absolute impunity. But I believe it could never occur to anyone to think that. So it must
 30 be granted that each person reserves to himself many things of which he remains the master, things which therefore depend on no one's decision but his own.

[5] Nevertheless, to understand rightly how far the right and 'power of the state extend, we must note that its 'power is not limited to what it can compel men to do from fear, but extends to
 [III/202] absolutely everything it can bring men to do in compliance with its commands. It's obedience which makes the subject, not the reason for the obedience. [6] For whatever reason a man resolves to carry out the commands of the supreme 'power, whether because he fears
 5 punishment, or because he hopes for something from it, or because he loves his Country, or because he has been impelled by any other affect whatever, he still forms his resolution according to his own judgment, notwithstanding that he acts in accordance with the command of the supreme 'power.

[7] So we must not infer simply from the fact that a man does something by his own judgment, that he does it by his own right,
 10 and not by the right of the state. For since he always acts by his own judgment and decision—both when he is bound by love and when he is compelled by fear to avoid some evil—if there is to be a state and a right over subjects, political authority must extend to everything which can bring men to decide to yield to it. So whatever a subject does which
 15 answers to the commands of the supreme 'power—whether he's been bound by love, or compelled by fear, or (as indeed is more frequent) by hope and fear together, whether he acts from reverence (a passion composed of fear and wonder) or is led by any reason whatever—he acts by the right of the state, not his own right.

[8] This is also established as clearly as possible from the fact that
 20 obedience concerns not so much the external action, as the internal action of the soul. So that person is most under another's control who resolves wholeheartedly to obey all the other's commands. Consequently, that ruler has the greatest authority who reigns over the hearts of his subjects. But if those who were most feared had the greatest authority,

Discourses III, vi, 1. Spinoza will return to this theme in §§8 and 17. Gebhardt places this note in the following sentence, but it seems to attach more logically where I have placed it.]

25 then the subjects of Tyrants would surely have it. For they are most feared by their Tyrants.²

[9] Though hearts cannot be commanded in the same way tongues can, still hearts are to some extent under the control of the supreme 'power, which can bring it about in many ways that most men believe, love, and hate whatever it wants them to.³ [10] Even if these things
30 don't happen by the direct command of the supreme 'power, still experience abundantly testifies that they often happen by the authority of its power and by its guidance, i.e., by its right. So without any intellectual incoherence, we can conceive men who believe, love, hate, disdain, or are overcome by any kind of affect whatever, solely in accordance with
[III/203] the right of the state.

[11] In this way we conceive the right and 'power of the state to be ample enough. Still, it will never be so great that those who hold it have an absolute power to do whatever they wish. I believe I've already shown this clearly enough. [12] I've said that I don't intend to show
5 how a state could be formed so that it might, in spite of everything, always be preserved securely. However, to achieve what I want to, I'll note the things divine revelation once taught Moses to this end. Then we'll consider the development of Hebrew history.⁴ From this we'll see the main things the supreme 'powers ought to grant to subjects, for
10 the greater security and advantage of the state.

[13] Both reason and experience teach, as clearly as can be, that the preservation of the state depends chiefly on the loyalty of its subjects, on their virtue, and on their constancy of heart in carrying out commands. But it's not so easy to see how they must be led so that they
15 constantly maintain their loyalty and virtue. [14] All men, whether they rule or are ruled, tend to prefer pleasure to difficult work.⁵ Those who've experienced how changeable the mentality of the multitude is

2. Cf. the aphorism Spinoza quotes from Antonio Pérez in TP vii, 14: "The use of absolute power is very dangerous for kings, very hateful to their vassals, very offensive to God and to nature, as a thousand examples show" (Pérez 1644, 287).

3. Cf. Quintus Curtius VIII, v, 5–6, where Alexander is described as wishing to be, not only called, but believed to be, the son of Jupiter, "as if he could rule men's minds as well as their tongues" (ALM). Cf. xvii, 22. Spinoza does not claim that rulers are absolutely powerless to control their subjects' beliefs (as Locke does in his *Letter*, p. 69), only that their powers to do this are very limited, that there are certain things rulers cannot try to take from their subjects without (as he puts it in the Preface, §31) "great danger to the state." This view may be influenced by Spinoza's knowledge of the history of the Jews in Iberia. Cf. iii, 54, and the annotation there. Spinoza will return to this theme in xx, 1–5.

4. *Hebraeorum historias et successus*. I accept the suggestion in Akkerman 1997 that this is a hendiadys for "development." As Totaro notes, there's a similar expression in xviii, 6 (Totaro 667, n. 12).

5. An allusion to Terence, *Andria* 77–78. Cf. TP vii, 1.

almost despair about it. They're governed only by affects, not by reason.
 20 Rushing headlong toward everything, they're easily corrupted either
 by greed or by extravagant living. [15] Everyone thinks that he alone
 knows everything, and wants everything to be done according to his
 mentality. He thinks a thing fair or unfair, permissible or impermissible,
 just to the extent that he judges it brings him profit or loss. From love
 of esteem, he disdains equals, and will not put up with being ruled by
 25 them. From envy for the greater praise or better fortune someone else
 receives—these things are never equal—he wishes the other person ill,
 and is delighted when bad things happen to him.

There's no need to go over all this. [16] Everyone knows how it
 goes—a disgust with the present, a craving to make fundamental changes,
 uncontrolled anger, a scorn for poverty—these affects lead men to wick-
 edness. Everyone knows how much they fill and disturb men's hearts.

30 To prevent all these things, and to establish the state so that there's
 no place for fraud—to establish things so that everyone, whatever his
 mentality, prefers the public right to private advantage, this is the task,
 this is our concern.⁶ [17] Though the necessity of solving this problem
 has compelled people to invent many solutions, we've never reached
 the point where a state is not in more danger from its own citizens
 [III/204] than from its enemies, and where the rulers don't fear their citizens
 more than their enemies.

[18] Witness the Roman Republic, unconquerable by its enemies,
 but so often conquered and wretchedly oppressed by its own citizens,
 particularly in the civil war between Vespasian and Vitellius. On this,
 see Tacitus, at the beginning of book IV of his *Histories*, where he
 5 describes how pitiful the city was [after Vespasian defeated Vitellius].⁷

[19] And as Curtius says at the end of book viii, Alexander viewed a
 formidable reputation in an enemy with fewer qualms than he did one
 in a citizen. He believed his greatness could be destroyed by his own
 citizens [but that the greater those he conquered, the brighter would
 be his own fame].⁸ Fearing what his fate might be, he implored his
 friends to

10 Make me secure from treachery within and domestic plots, and I shall
 face unafraid the crises of war and of Mars. Philip was safer on the

6. Borrowing, once again, from Vergil's *Aeneid* vi, 129.

7. The civil war between Vespasian and Vitellius occurred in the year of the four emperors, 69 A.D. Book IV of Tacitus' *Histories* begins with a description of the slaughter and looting which followed the defeat of Vitellius.

8. The beginning of this sentence is a virtual quotation from Quintus Curtius VIII, xiv, 46. Spinoza evidently expects his readers to know the passage well enough to complete it, because he ends with an "etc." What I've supplied in brackets completes the quotation.

battlefield than in the theater.⁹ Often he avoided the hand of the enemy, but he could not escape that of his own people. If you think about the deaths of other Kings, you will find more killed by their own people than by the enemy.^{10*}

[20] That's why, when Kings assumed the rule in earlier times, to
15 make themselves secure they tried to persuade people that they were descended from the immortal Gods. They thought that if only their subjects (and everyone else) didn't look on them as equals, but believed them to be Gods, they would easily surrender to them, and willingly submit to their rule.

[21] So Augustus persuaded the Romans that he was descended
20 from Aeneas, who was believed to be the son of Venus and one of the Gods. He wanted to be worshipped in temples, with sacred images, by flamens and priests.^{11*}

[22] Alexander wanted to be hailed as the son of Jupiter. He seems to have done this as a matter of policy, not out of pride, as his reply to Hermolaus' reproaches indicates:

25 It was almost enough to make me laugh when Hermolaus asked me to reject Jupiter, by whose oracle I'm recognized [as his son]. Are even the answers of the Gods in my 'power? He offered me the name of son. To accept it [note this well] was hardly unhelpful to the affairs we're engaged in. Would that the Indians also believed me to be a God. For wars depend on reputation, and often a false belief has been just as effective as a true one.^{12*}

30 In these few words he shrewdly proceeds to persuade the ignorant that he is what he pretends to be, and at the same time hints at the reason for the pretense.

[23] Cleon also did this in the speech he gave, trying to persuade the Macedonians to flatter the King by agreeing.¹³ For after he gave an appearance of truth to the pretense, reciting the praises of Alexander

9. Where he was assassinated by Pausanias. See Diodorus XVI, lciv, 1–3.

10. *See Quintus Curtius IX, vi [24–25]. [Spinoza makes his reference to Curtius in the text.]

11. *Tacitus, *Annals* I, x. [Spinoza makes his reference to Tacitus in the text.]

12. *Q. Curtius VIII, viii [14–15]. [Spinoza makes his reference in the text. Hermolaus was a young Macedonian nobleman who conspired to assassinate Alexander. When the conspiracy was discovered, Alexander permitted Hermolaus to voice his grievances before having him tortured and executed, along with most of his co-conspirators. See Quintus Curtius VIII, vi–viii. I've added the first bracketed phrase from the Loeb translation, for clarity. The second bracketed phrase is Spinoza's addition, for emphasis.]

13. Cf. Quintus Curtius VIII, v, 5–12. As Curtius describes the events, the purpose of Cleon's speech (and of Alexander's policy) was to get the Macedonians to worship Alexander as a god.

with admiration, and recounting his merits, he proceeded to point out
[III/205] the utility of this arrangement:

The Persians, in fact, are not only pious, but also prudent to worship their Kings as Gods. For the majesty of the state is the guardian of its safety . . .

And in the end he concludes

when the King goes in to a banquet, I will prostrate my body on the ground. Everyone else ought to do the same, especially those who are wise.

5 [24] But the Macedonians were too prudent for that. Only men who are complete barbarians allow themselves to be deceived so openly and to turn from subjects to slaves, of no use to themselves. But others have had better success than Cleon in persuading men that Majesty is sacred, God's representative on earth, that it has been established, not by men's vote and consent, but by God, and that it is preserved and
10 defended by God's particular providence and aid.¹⁴ [25] And in this way Monarchs have devised other means to secure their rule, which I'll omit. To get to the conclusions I want to reach, I shall, as I've said, note and weigh only those things divine revelation once taught Moses for this purpose.¹⁵

15 [26] We've already said in Ch. 5 [§§26–31] that after the Hebrews escaped from Egypt, they were no longer bound by any law to another nation, but were permitted to institute new laws for themselves, as they pleased, and to occupy whatever lands they wanted to. For after they'd been freed from the intolerable oppression of the Egyptians, and were not attached to any mortal by any contract, they regained their
20 natural right to do anything they could. Each of them could decide again whether he wanted to keep it, or to surrender it and transfer it to someone else.

[27] When they'd been placed in this natural condition, they decided to transfer their right only to God, not to any mortal. That was Moses' advice and they had the utmost trust in him. Without further delay
25 they all promised equally, in one voice, to obey all God's commands absolutely, and not to recognize any other law except what he would establish as law by Prophetic revelation. [28] And this promise, *or* transfer

14. ALM call attention to a passage in Machiavelli (*Discourses* I, xi; Wootton 1994, 113–16) which makes a similar comment on the political utility of religion. The theme is also present in Hobbes (*Leviathan* xii, 12, 20, 21) and in Livy, an important source for both Machiavelli and Hobbes, as the annotations in the cited editions of their works make clear.

15. Reminiscent of Machiavelli's comment on Moses in ch. vi of *The Prince* (Wootton 1994, 19).

of right, to God, was made in the same way as we've conceived it to be
 30 done in ordinary society, when men decide to surrender their natural
 right. For by an explicit covenant and an oath they freely surrendered
 their natural right and transferred it to God, without being compelled
 by force or terrified by threats.^{16*}

[III/206] [29] To make the covenant valid, lasting, and free of any suspicion of
 deception, God didn't undertake to give anything to them until after they
 experienced his wonderful power, by which alone they had been preserved,
 and by which alone they could be preserved in the future (see Exodus
 19:4–5). By the very fact that they believed they could be preserved by
 the power of God alone, they transferred to God all their natural power
 to preserve themselves, which previously they perhaps had thought they
 5 had of themselves. As a result, they transferred all their right.¹⁷

[30] God alone, then, had sovereignty over the Hebrews. By the
 force of the covenant this [state] alone was rightly called the Kingdom
 of God, and God was rightly called also the King of the Hebrews. As
 a result the enemies of this state [were rightly called] enemies of God,
 and citizens who¹⁸ wanted to usurp his authority [were rightly held]
 guilty of treason against God's majesty. And finally, the laws of the state
 [were rightly called] laws and commands of God.

10 [31] That's why in this state civil law and Religion (which, as we've
 shown, consists only in obedience to God) were one and the same
 thing. The doctrines of Religion were not teachings, but laws and
 commands. Piety was regarded as justice, and impiety a crime and an
 injustice. Anyone who failed in Religion ceased to be a citizen. For this
 15 alone he was considered an enemy. Anyone who died for Religion was
 thought to have died for his Country. Absolutely no distinction was
 made between civil law and Religion.

[32] For that reason this state could be called a Theocracy.¹⁹ Its
 citizens weren't bound by any law except the one revealed by God.
 But all these things consisted more in opinion than in fact. Really the

16. *Exodus 24:7. [Spinoza might also have cited Exod. 19:8 and 24:3 (ALM). The question remains why the covenant was necessary when they were transferring their natural rights to a God who by nature has the right to do all things. Cf. xvi, 3, 55.]

17. In §28 Spinoza said that the Hebrews' transfer of right to God was made in the same way as when men decide to surrender their natural right to the social order. In the human case the transfer of right is effected by a transfer of power (xvi, 24–25). It's difficult to see how there can be a transfer of power from man to God, whose omnipotence before the transfer presumably gives him nothing to gain from their surrender. The last two sentences of §29 look like they might be intended to deal with that problem.

18. *Quid* in Gebhardt III/206/8 is a typographical error, corrected silently in ALM.

19. Spinoza is here echoing a passage in Josephus which argued that the constitution of the Jewish state could be called a theocracy because "it placed all authority and sovereignty in God" (*Against Apion* II, 165, cited by ALM).

20 Hebrews retained the right of the state absolutely, as we'll establish in what follows, from the way this state was administered, which I've decided to explain here.

[33] The Hebrews didn't transfer their right to anyone else, but everyone surrendered his right equally, as in a Democracy, and they
 25 cried out in one voice "whatever God says" (without any explicit mediator) "we will do."²⁰ It follows that everyone remained completely equal by this covenant, that the right to consult God, and to receive and interpret his laws, was equal for everyone. Everyone held the whole administration of the state equally, without qualification. [34] That's
 30 why everyone equally went to God the first time to hear what he wanted to command.

But at that first greeting they were so terrified, so stunned by thunder and lightning when they heard God speak, that they thought their end was near. [35] Full of fear, then, they approached Moses again, saying:

behold, we have heard God speaking in the fire, and there is no reason why we should wish to die; certainly this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of God again, we shall certainly die; so you go near
 [III/207] and listen to everything our God says, and you [not God] shall speak to us; and everything God says to you, we will obey and carry out.²¹

[36] With these words they clearly abolished the first covenant and transferred to Moses, unconditionally, their right to consult God and
 5 to interpret his edicts. For here they promised to obey, not (as before) whatever God said to them, but whatever he said to Moses (see Deuteronomy 5, after the Decalogue, and 18:15–16).

[37] Moses, then, remained the sole promulgator and interpreter of the divine laws, and hence, also the supreme Judge, whom no one could judge. He was the sole representative of God among the Hebrews, i.e.,
 10 he had the supreme majesty, since he alone had the right to consult God and to give God's replies to the people, and to compel the people to carry them out. He alone, I say; for if anyone wanted to preach anything in God's name while Moses was alive, even though he was

20. Spinoza is evidently referring to Exod. 19:8 (though similar words recur in Exod. 24:3). Moses does act as a mediator in both instances, but the need for him to play that role is not made explicit until Exod. 20:18–21. The question whether it's possible to make a covenant with God without a mediator was an issue in Hobbes' *Leviathan*, discussed in Curley 2004.

21. Spinoza does not immediately say where this quote comes from, and some editors have assumed that he is continuing to quote from Exodus (specifically, 20:18–21). But as the next paragraph indicates, Spinoza has shifted to the account of the covenant in Deuteronomy 5, quoting vv. 24–27 (with some omissions). These verses make his point more clearly than any of the Exodus passages, none of which says explicitly "everything God says to you we will do" (my emphasis). Cf. also xix, 10.

a true Prophet, he was still guilty of usurping the supreme right (see Numbers 11:28).^{22**}

15 [38] We should note here that even though the people chose Moses, they could not, by law, choose a successor in his place. As soon as they transferred their right to consult God to Moses, and promised unconditionally to regard him as a divine oracle, they completely lost all right, and were obliged to accept as God's choice whomever Moses chose as
20 his successor. [39] If he had chosen someone who would have, as he did, the whole administration of the state, i.e., the right to consult God alone in his tent, and hence the authority to make and repeal laws, the right to decide about war and peace, to send ambassadors, establish judges, choose a successor, and administer absolutely all the functions of the supreme 'power, the state would have been nothing more than
25 a monarchy. There wouldn't have been any other difference [between it and other monarchies] except that generally a monarchic state is governed according to a decree of God hidden even from the Monarch himself, whereas the state of the Hebrews would have been governed (or ought to have been governed) in a certain way by a decree of God revealed only to the Monarch.

[40] This difference does not diminish the Monarch's dominion and
30 right over everyone. On the contrary, it increases it. As for the people of each state,²³ each is equally subject and ignorant of the divine decree. For each depends on what the Monarch says and only from that does he understand what is permissible and impermissible. Moreover, the people are not less, but more subject to the Monarch insofar as they believe that he commands nothing but what has been revealed to him by a decree of God.

[III/208] [41] But Moses chose no such successor. Instead he left the state to be administered by his successors in such a way that it couldn't be called either popular, or aristocratic, or monarchic, but Theocratic. For one person had the right of interpreting the laws and of communicating

22. **[ADN. XXXVI] In this passage two men are accused of prophesying in the camp. Joshua thinks they should be kept in custody. He would not have done this if everyone had been permitted to give the people divine answers without Moses' command. But it pleased Moses to absolve them of guilt; he reproves Joshua for urging him to press his royal right at a time when he found his right of ruling so wearying that he preferred dying to ruling alone. This is evident from Numbers 11:14[-15], where he replies to Joshua: *Are you hot with anger for my sake? Would that all of God's people were Prophets! I.e., would that the right of consulting God would return to the people, so that the rule would be with them!* So it wasn't that Joshua didn't know what was right, but only that he didn't know what was suitable at that time. That's why Moses chastised him, as David did Abishai when Abishai advised the king to condemn Shimei to death, Shimei being certainly guilty of treason. See 2 Samuel 19:22-23.

23. That is, of the Hebrew, theocratic monarchy, and other monarchies.

God's replies, and another had the right and 'power to administer the
 5 state according to the laws already explained and the replies already
 communicated. On this see Numbers 27:21.^{24**}

[42] For a better understanding of these matters, I'll explain in an
 orderly way how the whole state was administered.

First, the people were ordered to build a dwelling-place,²⁵ which was,
 as it were, the court of God, i.e., of the supreme Majesty of that state.
 10 This dwelling-place was to be built, not at the expense of one person,
 but from the resources of the whole people, so that the dwelling-place
 where God was to be consulted would be subject to the control of the
 community.

[43] [Next,] the Levites were chosen as the courtiers and administra-
 tors of this divine court.²⁶ Aaron, Moses' brother, was chosen the chief
 of these and, as it were, second to God the King. The law prescribed
 that his sons would succeed to his position. As nearest to God, he was
 15 the supreme interpreter of the divine laws, who gave the people the
 replies of the divine oracle, and finally, who petitioned God on behalf
 of the people. [44] If he [Aaron or whichever his successors was the
 chief priest] had had, along with these [powers of interpreting the
 law], the right to command [that the laws be obeyed], he would have
 needed nothing else to be an absolute monarch. But he was barred
 from this [by Numbers 27:18–21], and the whole tribe of Levi, without
 exception, was so deprived of the command of the whole community
 20 that it did not even have its own share [of the land] along with the

24. **[ADN. XXXVII] The interpreters I've had the chance to see translate vv. 19
 and 23 of this chapter badly. For Numbers 27:19 and 23 do not mean that he gave him
 precepts or furnished him with precepts, but that he created or constituted Joshua as
 the leader. This is common in Scripture. Cf. Exodus 18:23, 1 Samuel 13:15, Joshua 1:9,
 1 Samuel 25:30, etc. [Saint-Glavin has an expanded version of this note, adding: "The
 more the interpreters strain to render Numbers 27:19 & 23 word for word, the less
 intelligible they make it. I'm sure very few people understand its true meaning. For
 most imagine that in vs. 19 God commands Moses to instruct Joshua in the presence
 of the Congregation, and that in vs. 23 [Moses] lays his hands on [Joshua] and instructs
 him. They don't note that this way of speaking is very common among the Hebrews
 to declare that the choice of the leader is legitimate and that he is confirmed in his
 appointment. This is how Jethro speaks when he advises Moses to choose subordinate
 judges who would assist him in judging the People: *if you do this* (he says), *then God will*
command you, as if he said that his authority would be firm and that he would be able to
 last. On this see Exodus 18:23 and 1 Samuel 13:15 and 25:30 and especially Joshua 1:9,
 where God says to him *have I not commanded you, take courage and show yourself a man of*
heart, as if God said to him *is it not I who have made you the Leader; so do not be afraid of*
anything, for I will be with you everywhere."]

25. That is, the tabernacle, or mobile dwelling, which the Israelites were instructed
 to build to serve as a shrine for worship and an oracular source (see Exod. 25–27).

26. Apparently a reference to the establishment of the priesthood in Exod. 27:21–28:5.
 See the Glossary entry LEVITES.

other tribes, which it would possess by right, and from which it could at least live. But [Moses] established that the tribe of Levi would be fed by the rest of the people, in such a way that it would always be held in greatest honor by the common, ordinary people, as the only tribe dedicated to God.²⁷

[45] Next, an army, formed from the rest of the twelve tribes, was
 25 commanded to invade the domain of the Canaanites, to divide it into twelve parts, and to distribute it to the tribes by lots. For this task twelve leaders were chosen, one from each tribe. These leaders, along with Joshua, and the high priest Eleazar, were given the right to divide the lands into twelve equal parts and to distribute them by lot.²⁸

[46] Joshua was chosen supreme commander of this army [Num-
 30 bers 27:15–21]. He alone had the right to consult God in new matters, but not (as Moses had) alone in his tent, or in the tabernacle. He did this through the high Priest, who alone received God's replies. [Joshua was also granted] the right to establish the commands God communicated to him by the priest, to compel the people to obey them, to devise and use means of carrying them out, to choose from the army as many as he wanted, and whom he wanted, and to send
 [III/209] ambassadors in his own name. Absolutely every right of war depended only on his decree.

[47] On the other hand, no one succeeded to his post by any legal prescription; his successor was chosen immediately by God; and this happened only when the necessity of the whole people required it. Otherwise all matters of war and peace were administered by the leaders of the Tribes, as I shall soon show.

5 [48] Finally, [God] commanded everyone from age twenty to age sixty²⁹ to take up arms for military service, and to form armies only from the people, armies which swore loyalty not to the commander, nor to the high priest, but to Religion *or* God. These armies, then, were called the armies *or* hosts of God, and God, among the Hebrews, was
 10 called the God of hosts. That's why in great battles, on whose outcome either the victory or the defeat of the whole people depended, the ark of the covenant used to go in the middle of the hosts so that the people,

27. On the special rights of the Levites (and the special limitations of their rights), see Num. 27:12–21, 18:8–32, 35:1–8; Deut. 10:8–9, 18:1–8.

28. Numbers 1–2 describes the formation of the army which was to invade Canaan. The directions for the conquest of Canaan and the division of the land occur in Num. 33:50–35:8.

29. In Num. 1:1–3, God commands Moses and Aaron to enroll “every male from twenty years old and upward, everyone in Israel able to go to war,” without specifying that those over sixty are not required to serve. This formula is repeated frequently in Num. 1 and again in Num. 26:2. It's unclear where Spinoza gets his upper limit.

seeing their King, as it were, present among them, would fight with the utmost force.³⁰

[49] From Moses' commands to his successors we easily infer that
 15 he chose administrators, not rulers, of the state. For he gave no one the right to consult God alone and when he wanted to; so he gave no one the authority he himself had of making and repealing laws, deciding concerning war and peace, and choosing administrators both of the temple and of the cities. All these are functions of someone holding sovereignty.

20 [50] For the high priest had the right to interpret the laws and give God's replies, but only when asked by the commander, or the supreme council, or the like, not (as Moses had) whenever he wanted to. On the other hand, the supreme commander of the army and the councils could consult God when they wanted to, but could receive God's replies
 25 only from the high priest. So in the mouth of the priest God's dictates were not decrees, as they were in Moses' mouth, but only replies. Only when they had been accepted by Joshua and the councils, did they have the force of a command and decree.

[51] Again, this high priest, who received God's replies from God, didn't have an army, and didn't have the command by law. On the other
 30 hand, those who had the right to possess lands did not have the right to make laws. The high priest—this was as true of Aaron as it was of his son Eleazar—was indeed chosen by Moses. But when Moses was dead no one had the right to choose the priest. As the law prescribed, the son succeeded to the father.³¹

[III/210] [52] The commander of the army was also chosen by Moses, and he took on the role of commander, not from the right of the high priest, but from the right of Moses, given to him. Therefore, when Joshua died, the priest did not choose anyone in his place, nor did the leaders [of the tribes] consult God concerning a new commander, but each one retained Joshua's right over the army of his own tribe, and collectively they had that right over the army as a whole.

[53] It seems there was no need of a supreme commander except
 5 when they had to fight a common enemy with their combined forces. This in fact happened mainly in the time of Joshua, when they did not yet all have a fixed place and when everything was subject to the control of the community. But after all the tribes divided among themselves the lands they possessed by right of war, and those they were still under

30. See Josh. 3:2–6; 1 Sam. 4:3–11.

31. See Exod. 28:41; Num. 20:25–29, 25:10–13.

10 orders to possess,³² and everything was no longer everyone's, by that very fact the reason for a common commander ceased, since by that division the different tribes had to be considered not so much fellow citizens as allies. [54] In relation to God and Religion, of course, they had to be regarded as fellow citizens. But in relation to the right one
 15 had against another, they were only allies, almost in the same way as the Sovereign Federated States of the Netherlands are (if you discount the common temple).³³ For dividing common property into shares is just each person's possessing, alone now, his share, and everyone else's surrendering the right they had to that share.

[55] That's why Moses chose the leaders of the tribes,³⁴ so that after
 20 the command was divided each leader would have responsibility for his own share, i.e., the responsibility for consulting God through the high priest about the affairs of his own tribe, for commanding his own army, for founding and fortifying cities, for establishing judges in each city, for attacking the enemy of his own particular state, and of administering all matters of war and peace without exception. Nor were the leaders
 15 bound to recognize any other judge except God,^{35**} or a prophet whom

32. Cf. Josh. 13:1–7.

33. Gebhardt (V, 96–97) comments that Spinoza here assumes a view of the constitutional arrangements in the Dutch Republic characteristic of the Regents Party. On the complex nature of those arrangements, see the entries under "sovereignty in the United Provinces," in Israel 1995.

34. Num. 34:16–29.

35. **[ADN. XXXVIII] The Rabbis hypothesize that Moses established what they commonly call the Great Sanhedrin. They're not alone in this. Most Christians, as foolish as the rabbis, agree. Moses did, of course, choose seventy assistant judges, who shared with him responsibility for the republic, because he could not bear the burden of the whole people alone [Num. 11:16–17]. But he never made any law establishing a council of seventy men. On the contrary he commanded that each tribe should establish judges in the cities God had given it, who would resolve disputes according to the laws he had given them [Deut. 1:9–18; but cf. Exod. 18:13–27]. And if it happened that the judges themselves were in doubt about the law, they would go to the high priest (who was the supreme interpreter of the laws) or to a judge to whom they were at that time subordinated (for he had the right to consult the priest), so that they might settle the dispute according to the high priest's explanation [Deut. 17:12].

But if it happened that a subordinate judge maintained that he was not bound to give judgment in accordance with the opinion of the high priest, which he had received either from the priest himself or from the supreme 'power, he was condemned to death by the supreme judge, whoever he was at that time, who had made him a subordinate judge. See Deuteronomy 17:9. [This might be] either the supreme commander of the whole people of Israel, as Joshua was, or the leader of one of the tribes (who, after the division, had the right to consult the high priest about the affairs of his tribe, to decide about war and peace, to fortify cities, and to appoint judges, etc.), or the king, to whom some or all of the tribes had transferred their right.

To confirm this I could cite many testimonies from the histories, but of many I shall mention only one, which seems to be the main one. When the Shilonite Prophet chose Jeroboam to be king [1 Kings 11:29–39], he thereby gave him the right to consult the

God had explicitly sent. Otherwise, if he defected from God, the others were obliged, not to judge him as a subject, but to attack him as an enemy who had annulled the assurance of the contract.

[56] We have examples of this in Scripture. When Joshua died, it was
 30 the children of Israel, not a new supreme commander, who consulted God. When it was understood that the tribe of Judah had to attack its enemy first of all, that tribe alone contracted with Simeon that their combined forces would attack each one's enemy [in turn]. The rest of the tribes were not included in this contract (see Judges 1:1–3), but each one waged war separately against its own enemy (as is related in
 [III/211] this chapter), and received into subjection and allegiance whomever it wished, even if it had been commanded not to spare anyone, under any condition of a covenant, but to exterminate everyone. Because of this sin they were indeed censured, but no one called them to judgment.³⁶ It was not for this reason that they began to wage war against one
 5 another and some began to meddle in the affairs of others.

[57] On the other hand, [the other tribes] attacked the Benjaminites as enemies, because they had offended them and broken the peace accord in such a way that none of their allies could securely have ties of hospitality with them.³⁷ When the other tribes had done battle with the Benjaminites three times, and were finally victorious, they slaugh-

high priest and to establish judges, and absolutely every right which Rehoboam kept over his two tribes, Jeroboam obtained over the ten. So Jeroboam could establish the supreme council of the state in his own court with the same right Jehoshaphat could in Jerusalem (see 2 Chronicles 19:8). For it's certain that Jeroboam, insofar as he was king by God's command, was not bound by the law of Moses to stand before Rehoboam as a judge. So neither were his subjects, since they were not Rehoboam's subjects. Much less were they bound to stand before a court in Jerusalem appointed by Rehoboam and subordinate to him.

So in proportion as the Hebrew state was divided, there were many supreme councils in it. Those who do not attend to the varying condition of the Hebrews, but mix their different conditions into one, tangle themselves up in many snares. [For the rabbinic claim concerning the Great Sanhedrin, see *Tractate Sanhedrin* I, 2a. Gebhardt V, 130, cites Grotius (*De imperio summarum potestatum circa sacra*) as an example of a Christian author who accepted the rabbinic theory. For a helpful survey of modern discussions, see Mantel 2007.]

36. The Israelites are censured in Judg. 2:1–5 for making covenants with the Canaanites, violating a commandment given in Exod. 34:11–16. Neither of these passages suggests a command to exterminate the Canaanites, though extermination is commanded in Deut. 20:16–18.

37. See Judges 19. In a story reminiscent of Genesis 19, a Levite from Israel, traveling in Judah with his concubine, is given shelter for the night by an old man. The men of the city, members of the tribe of Benjamin, surround the house, demanding that the Levite be given to them for intercourse. The old man and the Levite offer them the concubine instead, whom they rape and leave to die. Judges 20 describes the vengeance the Israelites took on the Benjaminites. Judges 21 describes their reconciliation with the Benjaminites who survived.

tered everyone alike, the guilty and the innocent, by the right of war.
 10 Afterward, repenting too late, they grieved at what they had done. [58]
 These examples completely confirm what we have just said about the
 right of each tribe.

But perhaps someone will ask: who chose the successor to the leader
 of each tribe? About this I can infer nothing certain from Scripture
 15 itself; I conjecture, though, that since each tribe was divided into fami-
 lies, whose heads were chosen from the elders of the family, the one
 among these who was senior succeeded by law to the position of leader.
 [59] For Moses chose from the Elders seventy assistant judges, who
 formed a supreme council with him [Numbers 11:16–25]; those who
 had the administration of the state after Joshua’s death are called elders
 20 in Scripture [Joshua 23:2, 24:1, 31]; and finally, among the Hebrews
 nothing is more frequent than to understand by elders judges. I think
 everyone knows this.

[60] But for our purposes it doesn’t much matter whether we can
 know this with certainty. It’s enough that I’ve shown that after Moses’
 death no one had all the functions of the supreme commander. These
 25 things didn’t all depend on the decision of one man, or of one council,
 or of the people. Some were administered by one tribe, and others by
 the other tribes, with equal right for each one. From this it follows most
 clearly that after Moses’ death the state was neither monarchical, nor
 aristocratic, nor popular, but, as we have said, Theocratic: I) because
 30 the temple was the royal house of the state and, as we’ve shown, it was
 the only reason why all the tribes were fellow citizens; II) because all
 the citizens had to swear allegiance to God as their supreme judge; he
 was the only one they had promised to obey absolutely in everything;
 and finally, III) because, when it was necessary to appoint a supreme
 commander over everyone, only God chose that commander. [61] Moses
 explicitly proclaims this to the people in the name of God in Deuter-
 [III/212] onomy 18:15, and the choices of Gideon [Judges 6:11–40], Samson
 [Judges 13:2–25], and Samuel [1 Samuel 3] are witnesses to it. So we
 ought not to doubt that the other faithful leaders were also chosen in
 a similar way, even if the historical narrative concerning these leaders
 does not establish it.

[62] Now that we’ve explained [what sort of state the Israelites had
 5 after the death of Moses], it’s time to see how far this way of consti-
 tuting the state could moderate people’s hearts, and restrain both the
 rulers and the ruled, so that the ruled did not become rebels and the
 rulers did not become Tyrants.

[63] Those who administer the state or have the rule always try
 to cover up whatever crimes they commit under the appearance of

10 legality and to persuade the people that they've acted honestly. They can easily do this when the whole interpretation of the law depends only on them. For there's no doubt that in this way they acquire the utmost freedom to do whatever they want, whatever their appetite urges. On the other hand, if someone else has the right to interpret the laws, they lose that great freedom; the same thing happens if the
15 true interpretation [of the laws] is so evident to everyone that no one can doubt it.

[64] This makes it clear that giving the whole right to interpret the laws to the Levites (see Deuteronomy 21:5) took a great opportunity for crimes away from the Hebrew leaders. The Levites had no administration of the state and no share [of the land] with the other [tribes]. Their
20 whole fortune and honor depended on their interpreting the laws truly.

Again, the people as a whole were commanded to gather every seven years in a certain place, where the Priest instructed them in the laws. Moreover, each one was commanded to read and reread the book of the law by himself, continuously and with the utmost attention (see
25 Deuteronomy 31:9[–13] and 6:7).

[65] So if the leaders wanted the people to cherish and honor them, they had to be very careful (if only in their own interest) to administer everything according to the prescribed laws, and to see that everyone was well aware of this. If they did that, the people would venerate them as the ministers of God's sovereignty and as God's agents. If not, they
30 could not escape their subjects' greatest hatred. For there is, as a rule, no hatred like Theological hatred.³⁸

[66] To these means of restraining the unbridled lust of the Leaders, we may add another which was very important:

[L.] the army was formed from all the citizens (all from age twenty to age sixty, with no exceptions) and the Leaders could not hire any foreign soldiers as mercenaries.

[III/213] [67] I say that this was very important because it's certain that Leaders can oppress the people only with an army to whom they pay a salary, and that they fear nothing more than the freedom of soldiers who are their fellow citizens, who by their excellence, hard work, and readiness to shed their own blood, bring about the freedom and glory of the state.

5 [68] That's why, when Alexander had to fight Darius a second time, and he heard Parmenio's counsel, he didn't reproach Parmenio, who had given the counsel, but Polypercon, who was taking [Parmenio's] side. As Curtius says (IV, xiii, [1–10]), he didn't dare to reprimand

38. For more on this theme, see below, §§76–81.

Parmenio again, when he had recently criticized him more sharply than he wished [Curtius IV, xi, 10–15], and he could not suppress the
10 freedom of the Macedonians—which, as we’ve said [xvii, 19], he was very afraid of—not until after he’d increased the number of soldiers who had formerly been captives far beyond the number of Macedonian soldiers.³⁹ Then, he was able to indulge his weak character, long restrained by the freedom of the best citizens.

[69] If this freedom of citizen soldiers holds in check the leaders
15 of a human state, who are accustomed to take for themselves all the praise for victories, how much more must it have restrained the Hebrew leaders, whose soldiers fought, not for the glory of their Leader, but for the glory of God, and joined battle only when they had received an answer from God.

[70] A second means of restraining the Hebrew Leaders was that
20 [II.] they were all joined only by the bond of religion.

So if any of them defected from their religion and began to violate the divine right of each person, the rest could consider him an enemy and rightly silence him.

[71] A third means of restraint was

[III.] the fear of a new Prophet.

For if someone whose life was provably commendable showed by
25 certain accepted signs that he was a Prophet, by that very fact he (like Moses) had the supreme right to command, in the name of a God revealed to him alone, not (like the leaders) in the name of a God consulted only through the priest. [72] There’s no doubt that such men could easily draw an oppressed people to them, and [even] by slight signs persuade them of whatever they wanted to.

On the other hand, if the leader was administering things properly,
30 he could take precautions in time. The Prophet would first have to submit to his judgment, so that the leader could examine whether his life really was commendable, whether he had certain and indubitable signs of his commission, and finally, whether what he wanted to say in the name of God agreed with the accepted teaching and ordinary laws of the country. But if either the signs were not sufficient or the teaching
[III/214] was new, he could rightly condemn him to death.⁴⁰ Otherwise, he was accepted only by the authority and evidence of the leader.

39. See Quintus Curtius X, iii, which describes how, after a mutiny among his Macedonian troops, Alexander entrusted his protection to members of the defeated Persian army.

40. Cf. above, ii, 4–6, citing particularly Deut. 13:1–5. Spinoza has somewhat toughened the requirements for being regarded as a true prophet by emphasizing the leader’s

[73] The fourth means was that

[IV.] the Leader was not superior to the others in nobility or in hereditary right; the administration of the state was his only because of his age and excellence.

[74] Finally, we note that

[V.] the Leaders and the whole army could be swayed no more by a desire for war than by a desire for peace.

As we've said, the entire army was made up of citizens.⁴¹ So the same men administered both the affairs of war and those of peace. Whoever was a soldier in the camps was a citizen in civilian life; whoever was an officer in the camps was a judge in the court; and whoever was the commander in the camps was the leader in the state. [75] So no one could desire war for the sake of war, but only for the sake of peace, and to protect freedom. As it happened, the Leader abstained as much as he could from novelties, so that he would not be obliged to go to the high Priest and stand before him in a way contrary to his dignity.

These are the reasons which kept the Leaders within limits. [76] Now we must see how the people were checked. The foundations of the state show this very clearly. For anyone who attends to them even casually will immediately see that these arrangements had to produce in the hearts of the citizens a love so special that the hardest thing for them to think of would be betraying their country or defecting from it. On the contrary, everyone had to be moved so strongly that they would suffer death⁴² rather than live under foreign rule. [77] After they transferred their right to God, they believed that their kingdom was God's kingdom, that they alone were God's children, and that the other nations were God's enemies. As a result, they felt the most savage hatred toward the other nations—a hatred they also believed to be pious (see Psalm 139:21–22).⁴³ Nothing could be more repugnant to them than

obligation to determine whether the signs of prophecy were sufficient.

41. Machiavelli also favored relying on citizen armies, though on different grounds than Spinoza invokes. Cf. *The Prince* xii–xiii, and *Discourses* II, 20. See also TP vi, 10, and vii, 7.

42. Spinoza uses an idiom here which is found in Virgil's *Aeneid* I, 219 (ALM).

43. The psalm cited expresses hatred of those who hate God: "Do I not hate those who hate you, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? I hate them with a perfect hatred; I count them as my enemies." The psalmist does not say explicitly that this hatred is pious. But Maimonides quoted this passage to justify his claim that a Jew is required to hate and destroy anyone who doubts the foundations of the Torah. Cf. Kellner 2004, 16. Some expressions of this attitude may make a modern reader uncomfortable. Ps. 137:8–9 pronounces a blessing on one who pays the Babylonians back for what they did to Israel by seizing their babies and dashing them against the rocks. This issue resurfaces in xix, 29.

swearing loyalty to a foreign power and promising obedience to it. They could imagine nothing more disgraceful or detestable than betraying
 30 their country, the kingdom of the God they worshipped.

[78] Indeed, they considered it disgraceful even for someone to live outside his country, because they believed that their country was the only place they could practice the worship of God they were always bound to. They considered only that land sacred; they thought the others were unclean and profane. [79] That's why, when David was
 [III/215] forced to live in exile, he complained to Saul in this manner: *If it is men who incite you against me, they are cursed, because they cut me off from walking in the heritage of God, but say: Go, and worship foreign Gods* [1 Samuel 26:19]. What's especially notable here is that it was also for this reason that no citizen was condemned to exile. For one who sins deserves punishment, indeed, but not disgrace.

5 [80] So the love of the Hebrews for their country was not a simple love, but piety. Their daily worship so encouraged and fed this piety, and this hatred of other nations, that [these affects] had to become a part of their nature. For the daily worship was not only completely different from that of the other nations (which made them altogether individual and completely separated from the others), but also absolutely contrary
 10 to it. [81] That daily condemnation [of foreigners] had to produce a continual hatred; no other hatred could be lodged more firmly in their hearts than this. As is natural, no hatred can be greater or more stubborn than one born of great devotion *or* piety, and believed to be pious. And they did not lack the usual cause which invariably inflames
 15 hatred more and more: its reciprocation. For the other nations were bound to hate them most savagely in return.

[82] Reason teaches as clearly as possible how much all these things—freedom from human dominion, devotion to their country, an absolute right in relation to all others, a hatred not only permitted, but even pious, regarding everyone as hostile, the particularity of customs and rites—reason, I say, teaches, and experience itself has been a witness,
 20 how much all these things would strengthen the hearts of the Hebrews to bear everything with special constancy and virtue, for the sake of their Country. While the city was standing, they could never endure being under the rule of a foreign power. That's why they frequently called Jerusalem the rebellious city (see Ezra 4:12, 15).

25 [83] Though the second state, after the Priests took for themselves the right to rule,⁴⁴ was hardly a shadow of the first, it was very difficult for the Romans to destroy it. Tacitus gives evidence of this in his *Histories*:

44. Cf. below at xvii, 113.

30 *Vespasian had broken the back of the Jewish war, except for the siege of Jerusalem, a task made harder and more troublesome because of the mentality of the people and the persistence of their superstition than because adequate forces were available to the besieged for the difficulties they had to endure* (II, 4).

[84] But beyond these factors, whose evaluation depends only on opinion,⁴⁵ there was something else very unyielding in this state, which must have been the most important factor to prevent its citizens from thinking of defection or wanting to desert their country: the principle of advantage, the mainstay and life of all human actions. That force was
[III/216] exceptionally strong in this state. [85] Nowhere did the citizens possess their property with a greater right than did the subjects of this state, who, with the leader, had an equal share of the lands and fields.⁴⁶ Each one was the everlasting lord of his own share. If poverty compelled
5 anyone to sell his estate or field, it had to be restored to him once again when the jubilee year came.⁴⁷ They instituted other similar practices, so that no one could be alienated from his real property.

[86] Nowhere could poverty be more bearable than where the people had to cultivate, with the utmost piety, loving-kindness toward their
10 neighbor (i.e., toward their fellow citizens), so that God, their King, would favor them. The Hebrew citizens could prosper only in their own country; outside it they faced great harm and dishonor.

[87] Something else helped greatly, not only in keeping the people in their native country, but also in avoiding civil war and removing
15 causes for dispute: no one was subject to his equal; everyone was subject only to God, and loving-kindness and love toward one's fellow citizen were valued as the height of piety. The hatred they had for other nations, which other nations reciprocated, encouraged this in no small measure.

45. A suggests (502, n. 19) that Spinoza has in mind specifically the opinion of Tacitus, who accepts a theory that different nationalities have different mentalities which Spinoza will not accept. See below §§93–94. But Spinoza seems to have in mind the several factors enumerated in §82, not just the one in §83.

46. Spinoza's language has suggested to some translators that each of the subjects had a share of the land equal to the leader's, but it seems unlikely that Spinoza intended this. I can find no passage in Scripture which supports it. Totaro cites several examples indicating that in ancient Israel the king was expected to possess more than his subjects. See Totaro 687, n. 114. The system of land distribution did aim at a kind of equity, but what that seems to have meant was that initially land was distributed to tribes, and within the tribes to clans and households, in proportion to their size. See Num. 26:52–56; Josh. 13–21; and ABD III, 1025–30. (The tribe of Levi was an exception.) There were injunctions against the king's exalting himself above other members of the community, but these seem to be intended mainly to prevent his possessing too many wives and horses (Deut. 17:14–20).

47. On the Jubilee year, see Lev. 25:8ff. and the analysis in ABD III, 1025–30.

[88] Especially conducive [to promoting loyalty to their country] was the extreme training in obedience they were brought up with. They were obliged to do everything according to a definite legal prescription. They weren't permitted to plow as they pleased, but only at certain times and in certain years, and only with one kind of animal at a time.⁴⁸ Similarly, they could only sow and reap in a certain way and at a certain time.⁴⁹ Without exception their life was a continual cultivation of obedience. (On this see Ch. 5, concerning the use of Ceremonies [§§30–31].) [89] To those who had become completely accustomed to it, this regime must have seemed no longer bondage, but freedom. The inevitable result was that no one desired what was denied, but only what was commanded.

To achieve this it seems to have been quite helpful that at certain times of the year they were bound to devote themselves to leisure and joy, not to obey their heart, but to obey God from the heart. [90] Three times a year they had a feast in the presence of God (see Deuteronomy 16[16]); on the seventh day of the week they had to stop work and devote themselves to leisure [Exodus 35:1–3]; in addition, other times were designated at which honorable acts of joy and feasts were not just granted, but commanded. I don't think anything more effective can be devised for steering people's hearts in a certain direction. Nothing wins hearts more than the joy which arises from devotion, i.e., from love and wonder together. [91] They couldn't easily be wearied by the familiar practice of these things, because the worship designated for festive days was rare and varied.

To this we have to add their extreme reverence for the temple, a reverence they always preserved most scrupulously because of the special worship conducted there and the things they were bound to observe before anyone was permitted to go there. To this day they can't read without great horror about Manasseh's disgraceful conduct, how he dared to place an idol in the temple itself [2 Kings 21:3–9].

[92] The people also had no less reverence for the laws, which were kept most scrupulously in the inmost sanctuary. So there was no need at all to fear murmuring and prejudices among the people. No one dared to make a judgment about divine matters. They were obliged to obey, without ever consulting reason, in everything they were commanded to do, on the authority of a divine answer received in the temple or of a law established by God.

With this I think I have explained the guiding principle of this state clearly enough, even if briefly.

48. Perhaps a reference to Deut. 22:10 (Totaro).

49. Perhaps a reference to Deut. 22:9 (Totaro).

15 [93] Now we must ask why the Hebrews so often failed to obey the law, why they were so often subjugated, and why, in the end, their state could be completely destroyed.

Perhaps someone will say that this happened because the people were stiff-necked. But this is childish. Why was this nation more stiff-necked than others? Was it by nature? Surely nature creates individuals, not
 20 nations, individuals who are distinguished into nations only by differences of language, laws and accepted customs. [94] Only the latter two factors, laws and customs, can lead a nation to have its particular mentality, its particular character, and its particular prejudices.⁵⁰ So if we have to grant that the Hebrews were more stiff-necked than other
 25 mortals, we must ascribe that either to a vice of the laws or to a vice of the accepted customs.

[95] And of course this much is true: if God had wanted their state to be more stable, he would have established its rights and laws differently, and set up another way of administering it. So what else can
 30 we say, except that they made their God angry, not only (as Jeremiah says, in 32:31) from the establishment of the city, but ever since the establishment of the laws.

[96] Ezekiel (20:25[–26]) also testifies to this, saying

*Moreover, I gave them statutes which were not good, and laws by which they would not live, for I defiled them with their own gifts, by rejecting everything which opened the womb (i.e., the first-born), so that I might destroy them, that they might know that I am Yabweh.*⁵¹

50. As Bennett observes, Spinoza tacitly dismisses language as playing any role in the formation of national character. This is surprising given what he had said in vii, 15.

51. Atypically, Spinoza does not give us the Hebrew of the passage he translates here, and Akkerman calls his translation of a key phrase “completely inaccurate” (A 502, n. 22). Indeed, it’s difficult to see how Spinoza gets this translation out of the Masoretic text, which modern translations generally render quite differently. For example, the NJPS translation reads: “I gave them laws that were not good and rules by which they could not live. When they set aside every first issue of the womb, I defiled them by their very gifts—that I might render them desolate, that they might know that I am the LORD.” (A note suggests the possibility of emending the text so that it would have “guilty” instead of “desolate.”) ALM observe that Spinoza may be influenced by Tremellius’s Latin translation (772, n. 76). Totaro has a similar, but more extended, discussion (690–91, n. 126).

I take the central issue about the passage in Ezekiel to be whether the prophet represents God as saying that he commanded the people of Israel to sacrifice their first-born children to him, or whether Ezekiel merely says that at some point the Israelites (incorrectly) thought he had issued such a command. Exod. 13:1–2 and 22:28–29 might be regarded as loci of such a command, but the interpretation of these passages is controversial. Akkerman seems to favor a negative answer to the first question (citing Lev. 18:21–30), and an affirmative answer to the second (citing Ezek. 20:31). He might also have cited Jer. 19:4–6 in favor of this position.

Akkerman’s reading of Ezekiel would probably be dominant among biblical scholars. See, for example, Anchor Ezekiel, 368–69. However, I find Levenson’s arguments

To better understand these words, and the reason for the destruction
 [III/218] of the state, we must note that [God's] first intention was to hand over
 the whole of the sacred ministry to the first-born, not to the Levites (see
 Numbers 8:17). [97] But after everyone except the Levites worshipped
 the calf [Exodus 32:25–29], the first-born were rejected and defiled, and
 5 the Levites were chosen in their place (Deuteronomy 10:8).

The more I consider this change, the more it compels me to burst
 out in the words of Tacitus: at that time God's concern was not with
 their security, but with vengeance [see Tacitus, *Histories* I, 3]. I cannot
 wonder enough that there was so much anger in the heavenly heart⁵²
 that he established the laws, which always aim only at the honor, well-
 10 being and security of the whole people, with the intention of taking
 vengeance on and punishing the people—so that the laws seemed not
 to be laws, i.e., the salvation of the people, but rather penalties and
 punishments. [98] For all the gifts they were obliged to give the Levites
 and priests, as well as the fact that they had to redeem the first-born
 and give money to the Levites on a per capita basis [Numbers 3:44–51],
 15 and finally, the fact that only the Levites were permitted to approach
 the sacred things [Numbers 16:9–10]—all these things continuously
 accused them of defilement and rejection.

[99] Again, the Levites constantly had something to reproach them
 with. Doubtless among so many thousands [of Levites] there were
 many troublesome, foolish Theologians. As a result the people were
 20 anxious to keep an eye on the deeds of the Levites—who were, after
 all, men—and as happens, to accuse them all because of one's offense.
 So there was continual murmuring, and a weariness with feeding men
 who were idle, envied, and not related to them by blood (especially
 when food was expensive).

[100] What is so strange, then, if in times of tranquillity, when evi-
 dent miracles stopped, and there were no men of the most meticulous
 25 authority, the people's spirit, angered and niggardly, began to lose its
 resolve, so that finally they failed in their loyalty to a form of worship

persuasive: though Ezekiel regards the sacrifice of the first-born as an abomination, he nevertheless asserts that God commanded it, because this suited his larger purposes. (See Levenson 1993, ch. 1.)

What I find most striking about Spinoza's treatment of this text is that he doesn't seem to think it has anything to do with the question of child sacrifice. From his translation and subsequent discussion, it looks as though he thinks Ezekiel did not say that God commanded the sacrifice of the first-born (understanding Exod. 34:20 to call instead for their redemption). He seems to take the bad laws Ezekiel attributes to God to be those rejecting the first-born as priests, and establishing the Levites in their place. This does not seem to be the most natural reading of the text.

52. An allusion to Vergil, *Aeneid* I, 11 (Wernham).

which, although divine, had still been discredited among them and was suspect, and desired a new worship? What is so strange if the Leaders, to get the supreme right of command exclusively for themselves, constantly sought ways to bind the people to themselves, and turn them from the high Priest, and so granted the people everything and introduced new forms of worship?

[101] But if the Republic had been constituted in accordance with [God's] first intention, the right and honor would always have been equal among all the tribes, and everything would have been arranged most securely. For who would wish to violate the sacred right of their own blood-relatives? What else would they prefer to feeding their own blood-relatives, brothers and parents, from Religious piety? and to being taught the interpretation of the laws by them? and finally, to [III/219] waiting for divine answers from them?

[102] Next, in this way—that is, if the right of administering sacred affairs had been equal among all the tribes—they would have remained much more closely united. Indeed, even if the Levites had been chosen to administer sacred matters, there would have been nothing to be feared, 5 provided that choice had a cause other than anger and vengeance. But as we've said, they had angered their God, who (to recall again the words of Ezekiel [20:25]) defiled them with their own gifts, rejecting everything which opened the womb, in order to destroy them.

[103] Moreover, the historical narratives themselves confirm this. As soon as the people began to flourish in tranquillity in the desert, 10 many men, not from the ordinary people, began to be bitter about this choice, and from this they took the occasion to believe that Moses had instituted nothing by divine command, but had done everything according to his own pleasure, because he'd chosen his own tribe before all others, and had given the right of priesthood to his own brother forever. With a great commotion, they approached him claiming that 15 everyone was equally holy and that he was unjustly raised above everyone else.⁵³ [104] He could not quiet them in any way, but when he used a miracle as a sign of his good faith, all the rebels were annihilated [Numbers 16:31–35]. This gave rise to a new and general rebellion

53. Spinoza is referring to the revolt described in Numbers 16, which initially involved two hundred and fifty Israelite men, said in 16:2 to be “leaders of the congregation, chosen from the assembly, well-known men” (NRSV) or “chieftains of the community . . . men of repute” (NJPS). It is unclear in the text just who is rebelling and for what reason. Modern scholars generally attribute this to an editor's attempt to combine different traditions. In one members of the formerly dominant tribe of Reuben were struggling to regain their leadership; in the other members of the tribe of Levi who were not Aaronids were protesting the special position of the Aaronid priesthood. For discussion see Kugel 2007, 330–34. The annotation in HCSB is also helpful.

of the whole people [Numbers 16:41–50], who believed that the first rebels had been annihilated, not by God's judgment, but by Moses's cunning. He finally quieted them after they had been worn out by a
 20 great calamity or plague, but in such a way that they all preferred death to life. So at that time it was more that the rebellion had ended than that harmony had begun.

[105] Scripture is a witness to this in Deuteronomy 31:21, where God, after predicting to Moses that after his death the people would defect from divine worship, says this to him: *for I know the appetite of this people, and what it is planning today, when I have not yet led it to*
 25 *the land I swore* [to give to it]. A little later [31:27] Moses says to the people: *for I know your rebelliousness and your stubbornness. If you have been rebels against God while I lived among you, how much more will you be rebels after my death.*

[106] And that's what happened, as everyone knows. That's why there were great changes, and a great license to do anything, and extravagant
 30 living, and negligence, with everything going from bad to worse, until, having often been subjugated, they completely broke away from the divine law, and wanted a mortal king [1 Samuel 8:4–5], so that the royal house of the state would not be the Temple, but the court, and so that the tribes would all remain fellow citizens, not any longer in virtue of divine law and the priesthood, but in virtue of the Kings' law.

[107] This greatly encouraged new rebellions, and led in the end to the complete ruin of the state. For nothing is more intolerable for
 [III/220] a King than ruling at someone else's pleasure and allowing a state within a state.⁵⁴ The first [kings], chosen from the private citizens, were content with the degree of dignity to which they had risen.⁵⁵ [108] But after their sons took possession of the rule by right of succession, they began to gradually change everything, so that they alone would hold
 5 the whole right of command. For the most part they lacked this so long as the right over the laws did not depend on them, but on the high Priest, who guarded the laws in the sanctuary and interpreted them to the people. They were bound by the laws, as their subjects were, and could not legally repeal them or make new laws with equal authority.

[Other factors encouraging rebellions:] The law of the Levites treated
 10 both the Kings and their subjects as profane, and prohibited them equally

54. *imperium in imperio*. Gebhardt (V, 99–100) notes the frequent occurrence of this expression in politico-religious controversies in the seventeenth century, citing (among others) passages from Hobbes and De la Court, where the issue is whether religious authorities within a state are juridically independent of the political authority. It occurs in a different context in E III Pref. and TP ii, 6.

55. Referring to Saul and David (ALM).

from administering sacred matters. Moreover, the whole security of [the king's] rule depended only on the will of one person, who was seen as a Prophet. [The people] had seen examples of [the king's dependence on the will of a Prophet]: the great freedom Samuel had to give orders to Saul about everything, and how easily Samuel could transfer the right to rule to David because of one instance of wrongdoing.⁵⁶ So they had
 15 a state within a state, and ruled at someone else's pleasure.

[109] To overcome these obstacles, then, they permitted other temples to be dedicated to the Gods, so that there would be no further consultation with the Levites.⁵⁷ Next, they sought out a number of people who would prophesy in the name of God, so that they might have Prophets whom they could oppose to the true Prophets.⁵⁸

[110] But whatever they tried to do, they could never be granted their
 20 wish. For the Prophets, who were prepared for everything, waited for an opportune time: the rule of a successor (which is always precarious as long as the memory of his predecessor is strong). Then they could easily use their divine authority to induce someone hostile to the King and renowned for his virtue to defend divine right and to take legal control of the state, or of a part of it.

25 [111] But the Prophets weren't able to make any progress in this way. For even though they removed a Tyrant from their midst, nevertheless, the causes [of tyranny] remained. So all they accomplished was to buy a new Tyrant at the cost of much citizen blood.⁵⁹ There was no end to dissension and civil wars. In fact, the causes for violations of divine right were always the same. The only way they could be removed was
 30 by removing the whole state from their midst at the same time.

[112] So now we see how Religion was introduced into the Hebrew Republic, and how its sovereignty could have been everlasting, if the just anger of the lawgiver had permitted it to stay the same. But because this could not happen, in the end it had to perish.

I've spoken here only about the first state. [113] The second⁶⁰ was
 [III/221] hardly a shadow of the first, since [the Hebrew people] were subjects

56. Presumably the one instance of wrongdoing is Saul's failure to completely exterminate the Amalekites, as commanded by God in 1 Sam. 15:3. Samuel transfers the rule from Saul to David in 1 Sam. 16:13.

57. See 1 Kings 12:26–32 (ALM).

58. Perhaps a reference to the prophets of Baal and Asherah who opposed Elijah in 1 Kings 18.

59. ALM note a strikingly similar passage in De la Court, I, 32, p. 113.

60. See the Glossary entry SECOND STATE. Spinoza here gives an account of the Second Temple Period whose brevity makes it somewhat misleading. He jumps from the era of Persian rule to the revolt of the Maccabees, without mentioning the intervening Hellenistic period. The biblical sources themselves are rather sketchy. See 1 Macc. I, helpfully annotated in HCSB. Spinoza's source for the high priest Simon's assumption

of the Persians, and bound by Persian law. After they acquired their freedom, the High Priests took for themselves the right to rule, by which they obtained absolute control. This created among the Priests an intense desire to rule and to attain the high priesthood. [114] So
 5 there was no need to say more about the second state.

But whether the first, insofar as we've conceived it to be durable, can be imitated, or whether it's pious to imitate it as much as possible, will be evident from what follows. [115] Here I should like to note only, as a kind of conclusion, what we have already hinted at above: the things we have shown in this Chapter establish that divine right,
 10 or the right of religion, arises from a covenant, without which there is only natural right. So the Hebrews weren't bound by a religious command to any piety toward nations which weren't participants in a covenant with them; they were bound in that way only toward their fellow citizens.

[III/221]

CHAPTER XVIII

Certain Political doctrines are inferred from the Republic and history of the Hebrews

[1] Though the Hebrew state, as we've conceived it in the preceding Chapter, could have lasted forever, nevertheless no one can imitate
 20 it now. Nor is this even advisable. Whoever wanted to transfer their right to God would have to make an explicit covenant with God, as the Hebrews did. So not only would the will of those transferring their right be required, so also would that of God, to whom the right would have to be transferred.¹ [2] God, however, has revealed through his Apostles that his covenant is no longer written with ink, or on stone tablets, but
 25 written on the heart, by the spirit of God.² Moreover, such a form of state could be useful, perhaps, only for those who are willing to live by themselves, alone, without any foreign trade, shutting themselves up within their own boundaries, and segregating themselves from the

of absolute power is probably 1 Macc. 14:25–49, an event not covered in Josephus, his other main source for this history. His verb for that act is *usurpare*, which I do not here (or in §83) translate by “usurp,” for reasons explained in the Glossary.

1. Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan* xiv, 23, and xviii, 3. I have discussed this and other Hobbesian passages related to the covenant with God in Curley 2004.

2. An allusion to Paul, 2 Cor. 3:3.

rest of the world. It couldn't be at all useful for those to whom it's necessary to have dealings with others. So it could be useful only for a very few people.

[3] Though [the form of this state] can't be imitated in every respect,
 30 still, it had many excellent features, which are at least well-worth noting, and perhaps imitating. Because my intention, as I mentioned [xvi, 36–37; xvii, 12], is not to treat a Republic in detail, I'll put most of
 [III/222] those things to one side and note only those which serve my purpose:

First, it is not contrary to God's Kingship to choose a supreme majesty which has the supreme right of command.

[4] For after transferring their right to God, the Hebrews handed over the supreme right of command to Moses. So he alone had the
 5 authority to make and repeal laws in God's name, to choose the ministers of sacred affairs, to judge, to teach, to punish, and to command absolutely all things to all people. [5]

Second, though the ministers of sacred affairs were the interpreters of the laws, it was still not their function to judge the citizens or to excommunicate anyone.

10 This was only in the jurisdiction of the judges and the leaders chosen from the people (see Joshua 6:26, Judges 21:18, and 1 Samuel 14:24).³

[6] In addition to these points [about the form of the state], if we attend to the course of Hebrew history, we'll find others also worth noting, e.g., that

15 I. there were no sects in their Religion until after the high Priests in the second state had the authority to make [religious] decrees and to handle the affairs of the state.

3. Though Spinoza was himself subjected to a proceeding, *cherem*, commonly referred to as excommunication, what that term referred to in the Amsterdam Sephardic community was rather different from what "excommunication" has normally meant in Christian communities. And *cherem* has a very different meaning in the biblical context. For discussion, see the Glossary entry EXCOMMUNICATION. As ALM note, Spinoza here takes a position on issues controversial in the Protestant milieu of his day. Calvin, for whom excommunication was an important means of church discipline, regarded this as a spiritual power, residing in the church, and completely separate from the right of the sword (*Institutes* IV, xi, 5). But he also assumed that in Christian societies the civil government had a duty "to cherish and protect the outward worship of God, to defend sound doctrine of piety and the position of the church . . . [and] to form our social behavior to civil righteousness" (*Institutes* IV, xx, 2). For helpful discussion, see Höpfl 1982. Hobbes thinks the Jews practiced excommunication only after the Babylonian captivity (*Leviathan* xlii, 20 [OL]). He granted that by commission from Jesus Christian pastors had the power to excommunicate, but argued that without the assistance of the civil power, excommunication "is without effect, and consequently, ought to be without terror" (xlii, 31).

To make this authority permanent, they took for themselves the right to rule, and in the end wanted to be called Kings.

[7] The reason [why sects arose after the priests acquired this authority] is easy to see. In the first state no [religious] decree could derive its validity from the high Priest, since they had no right to make [religious] decrees, but only to give God's answers when asked to do so by the rulers or the councils. And for that reason they could not then have any itch to decree novelties, but only to administer and defend familiar and accepted decrees. The only way they could safely preserve their own freedom when the rulers were opposed to them was to preserve the laws uncorrupted. [8] But after they had acquired the 'power to handle the affairs of the state, and had joined the right to rule to that of priesthood, each one began to seek the glory of his own name both in religion and in other matters, determining everything by priestly authority and daily issuing new decrees, concerning ceremonies, the faith, and everything else, decrees they wanted to be no less sacred and to have no less authority than the laws of Moses. [9] The result? Religion declined into a deadly superstition and the true meaning and interpretation of the laws was corrupted.

Another reason: while the priests were trying to get the rule at the beginning of the restoration, to get the ordinary people on their side they gave lip service to everything, approving what the ordinary people did, even if it was impious, and accommodating Scripture to their worst customs. [10] Malachi testifies to this in the most explicit terms: after he reproached the priests of his time,⁴ calling them men who despise God's name [Malachi 1:6], he proceeds to criticize them as follows: *The priest's lips keep 'knowledge safe, and the law is sought from his mouth, because he is God's messenger; but you have departed from the path, and have made the law a stumbling-block for many; you have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the God of hosts* [Malachi 2:7–8]. And so he goes on to charge them with interpreting the laws as they pleased, and taking no account of God, but only of persons.

[11] But certainly the High Priests were never able to do this so discreetly that the wise did not notice it. So they⁵ claimed, with growing boldness, that they were not bound by any laws except written ones.

4. Malachi's time seems to have been the period shortly before Nehemiah's return, c. 445 B.C.E. (HCSB 1284). So Spinoza is now talking about an earlier period than the one following the Maccabees' revolt. This seems to be the only place in the Hebrew Bible where the priests are described as God's messengers.

5. The reference of the pronoun is disputed. Some have thought it possible, and perhaps clear, that Spinoza is accusing the *high priests* of growing boldness. In that case we might wish to translate *crecente audacia* by "growing impudence (or audacity)." Cf. ALM, 776; Totaro, 698; Silverthorne-Israel, 232. But I think Shirley was right to take the reference

Otherwise it was not at all obligatory to observe the decrees the Pharisees mistakenly called traditions of their forefathers. As Josephus says in his *Antiquities*, the Pharisees had their support mainly from the ordinary people.

15 [12] However that may be, we cannot have any doubt that the flattery of the Priests, and the corruption of religion and of the laws, and the incredible increase in the number of laws gave a very great and frequent opportunity for arguments and disputes, which could never be settled. For where men begin to argue with the fierce heat of superstition, and the magistrate aids one or the other side, they can never be
20 calmed, but must be divided into sects.

[13] The second point worth noting is that

II. the Prophets, as private men, aggravated people more than they corrected them by the freedom with which they warned, reproached, and censured
25 them. On the other hand, when these same people were warned or criticized by their Kings, they were easily set right.⁶

Indeed, the Prophets were often intolerable even to pious Kings because of the authority they had to judge what it would be pious or impious to do, and even to criticize the Kings themselves, if they were bold enough to treat some public or private business in a way which conflicted with the judgment of the Prophets.

30 [14] King Asa, who, according to the testimony of Scripture, reigned piously [2 Chronicles 14:2, 1 Kings 15:14], put the Prophet Hanani in prison (see 2 Chronicles 16[:10]) because he dared to censure and reproach him freely for the pact he made with the King of Aramaea. Moreover, there are other examples which show that religion derived more harm than good from such freedom [to criticize], not to mention
[III/224] that the Prophets' retention of so much right for themselves was a source of intense civil wars.

[15] It's also worth noting that

III. so long as the people had sovereignty, they had only one civil war. And even
5 it was completely stamped out. The winners took such pity on the losers that they were careful to restore them to their former status and power.⁷ But after the people, who were by no means accustomed to kings, changed the first form of the state into a monarchical one, there was hardly any end to civil wars, and they engaged in battles so fierce that they surpassed the reputation of all others.

to be to "the wise." It helps to understand this passage if we realize that the passage in Josephus Spinoza cites is *Antiquities* XIII, x, 6, and not (*pace* Gebhardt et al.) XVIII, i, 3.

6. Spinoza will return to this point in xix, 45, as part of his argument for secular control of religion (ALM).

7. Spinoza is presumably referring to the war against the Benjaminites, discussed above (xvii, 57).

10 [16] In one battle—this is almost beyond belief—the men of Judah killed five hundred thousand men of Israel;⁸ in another, the men of Israel slaughtered many men of Judah (Scripture does not say how many), seized the King himself, almost destroyed the wall of Jerusalem, and (to show that there was no limit to their anger) completely plundered
15 the Temple itself. Loaded down with enormous spoil taken from their brothers, their thirst for blood satisfied, they took hostages, left the King in a kingdom already almost destroyed, and put down their arms, made secure not by the good faith of the men of Judah, but by their weakness [2 Chronicles 25:21–24].

[17] A few years later, when the men of Judah had rebuilt their
20 strength, they went to war again; and again the men of Israel were the winners, slaughtering a hundred and twenty thousand men of Judah, taking up to two hundred thousand of their women and children captive, and again seizing a great many spoils [2 Chronicles 28:5–15]. Exhausted by these and other battles, related casually in the histories, in the end they fell prey to their enemies.

25 [18] Next, if we want to consider the times when they were permitted to enjoy absolute peace, we'll find a great difference. Before they had kings, they often passed forty years [Judges 3:11, 5:31, 8:28]—and once eighty years [Judges 3:30], a greater period than anyone might have expected—harmoniously, without any war, either external or internal. [19] But after Kings got sovereignty, we read that they all waged wars—because people had to fight for glory,⁹ and not (as before) for
30 peace and freedom. The only exception was Solomon, whose virtue, wisdom, could show itself better in peace than in war. Moreover, the deadly lust to rule generally made the path to the throne very bloody.

[20] Finally,

IV. while the people's rule lasted, the laws remained uncorrupted and were observed more constantly.

For before the kings there were very few Prophets who warned the
[III/225] people. But after a King was chosen,¹⁰ there were many at the same time. Obadiah, for example, delivered a hundred prophets from slaugh-

8. According to 2 Chron. 13:17. The Chronicler's numbers do strain credulity. HCSB notes that the total of all U.S. casualties in World War II was about four hundred thousand. IB comments (III, 342–43) that Chronicles "exaggerates numbers and amounts out of all possibility . . . it is not history in our sense of the word at all." This may be one reason for the hostility toward Chronicles expressed at x, 2.

9. Echoing a theme from the Preface, §10.

10. A decision vigorously opposed at the time by Samuel (1 Sam. 8). Hobbes' discussion of Samuel's diatribe against monarchy in *Leviathan* xx, 16, makes it an explanation of the rights of kings.

ter, and hid them so that they would not be killed with the others [1 Kings 18:4, 13]. And we don't see that the people were ever deceived by false Prophets until after they gave sovereignty to kings, whom most
5 of them were eager to flatter by agreeing.

[21] Moreover, the people, whose spirit is generally either confident or humble, depending on how things are going,¹¹ easily corrected itself in disasters, turned to God, and revived the laws. In this way it extricated
10 itself from every danger. The kings, on the other hand, whose spirit was always equally elevated and could not be altered without disgrace, clung stubbornly to their vices right up to the final destruction of the city.

[22] From this account we see very clearly:

i) how ruinous it is, both for religion and for the Republic, to grant the ministers of sacred affairs the right to make [religious] decrees or to
15 handle the business of the state; and how much more stable everything is if these people are held in check, so that they don't give any answers except when asked, and in the meantime teach and put into practice only doctrines which have already been accepted and are very familiar.

[23] [Secondly, we also see clearly]

ii) how dangerous it is to make purely speculative things a matter of
20 divine right and to make laws concerning opinions, which people usually debate about, or can debate about.

For that government which makes it a crime to hold opinions—which each person has a right to hold, a right no one can surrender—is the most violent of all. Indeed, when this happens, what rules most is the anger of the mob.

[24] So Pilate, to defer to the anger of the Pharisees, ordered Christ to be crucified, though he knew him to be innocent.¹² And the Pharisees, to
25 dislodge the rich from their positions of status, began to raise questions about religion, and to accuse the Sadducees of impiety.¹³ Following the Pharisees' example, the worst hypocrites, stirred up by the same madness (which they call zeal for divine right), have everywhere persecuted men

11. ALM note an echo of Terence's *Mother-in-law*, 380. We might also recall the Preface, §§1–3.

12. Spinoza accepts what the gospels seem agreed on: Jewish responsibility for the death of Jesus. Cf. Matt. 27:11–26; Mark 15:1–15; Luke 23:1–25; John 18:28–19:16. Nowadays this topic is controversial, as a comparison of Brown 1994 with Crossan 1996 will demonstrate. See also Letter 67, IV/287/30–35.

13. ALM (followed by Totaro) cite two passages from Josephus as a likely source for this claim about the conflict between Pharisees and Sadducees: *The Jewish Wars* II, 8, and *The Antiquities of the Jews* XVIII, 1. Neither passage seems to me quite satisfactory support for the historical claim Spinoza is making here.

distinguished for their integrity, famous for their virtue, and on that account, envied by the mob—publicly denouncing their opinions and
 30 inflaming the savage multitude in their anger against them.¹⁴

[25] It's not easy to restrain this impudent license, because the deceptive appearance of religion masks it. This is especially true when the supreme 'powers have introduced some sect, in which they themselves do not hold a position of authority.¹⁵ Then they're not thought of as the interpreters of divine right, but as the followers of a sect, i.e., as people who recognize the learned men of that sect as interpreters of
 [III/226] divine right. That's why the authority of the magistrates about these matters is usually not worth much with the mob, whereas the authority of the learned, to whose interpretations they think even kings must submit, is very great.

[26] To avoid these evils, then, the safest thing for the Republic is to locate piety and the practice of Religion only in works, i.e., only in
 5 the practice of loving-kindness and justice, and for the rest, to leave everyone's judgment free. But more of this later [xx, 30–32, 42–46].

[27] [Thirdly,] we see

iii) how necessary it is, both for the Republic and for religion, to grant the supreme 'powers the right to distinguish between what is permissible and what is not.

10 For if this right to distinguish concerning deeds could not be conceded to the divine Prophets themselves without great harm both to the Republic and to Religion, much less should it be conceded to those who do not know how to predict the future and cannot perform miracles. But I'll discuss this in detail later.¹⁶

[28] Finally, we see

15 iv) how fatal it is to choose a Monarch when the people are not accustomed to live under kings, and have laws already established.

For the people will not be able to bear so much control, and the royal authority will not be able to allow the laws and rights of the

14. Zac (1965, 163n.) argues that Spinoza here has in mind the persecution of the Remonstrants by the Counter-Remonstrants, calling attention to the discussion of the controversy coming up in xx, 41.

15. *cujus ipsae auctores non sunt*. Some have translated this as “of which they themselves were not the authors/founders.” This is possible linguistically, but if Spinoza is thinking of the Remonstrant controversy, the translation in the text seems more likely.

16. The terms here translated “permissible” (*fās*) and “impermissible” (*nefās*) in the statement of the third point, make it clear that Spinoza intends the sovereign's authority to extend to questions of religious right and wrong. His Erastianism has already been announced in xvi, 57ff., and will be developed further in the next chapter.

people to be established by someone else of lesser authority. Much less will the royal authority consider defending them, especially because in establishing them no thought could have been given to the King, but
 20 only to the people or the council which thought it had the rule. So if the King defended the former rights of the people, he would seem to be its slave, rather than its master. [29] A new Monarch will strive, with the greatest eagerness, to establish new laws, to transform the rights of the state to his own advantage, and to reduce the people to the point where it cannot take status away from the Kings as easily as it gave it.¹⁷
 25 [30] But here I can't ignore the fact that

[v] it's also no less dangerous to remove a Monarch from your midst, even if it's clear in every way that he's a tyrant.¹⁸

For a people accustomed to royal authority, and held in check only by that authority, will disdain a lesser authority and mock it. So if the people removes one monarch from their midst, they will have to choose
 30 another in his place (as long ago the Prophets had to).¹⁹ And this new monarch will be a tyrant, not because he wants to, but because he must. [31] For how can he look at the hands of the citizens, stained with blood from murdering a king, and see them glorying in their assassination, as in a deed well done, when they have done it only to set an example for him. If he wants to be a King, and does not want to acknowledge the people as the judge of Kings, and his master, or to
 [III/227] rule at their pleasure, he must avenge the death of his predecessor and set a contrary example for his own benefit, so that the people will not dare to commit such a crime again. [32] But he will not easily be able to avenge the death of the tyrant by killing citizens unless at the same time he defends the cause of the former tyrant, endorses his deeds, and
 5 so follows completely in the footsteps of the former tyrant.

That's how it happens that the people can often change the tyrant, but can never destroy him, or change a monarchic state into another, of a different form.²⁰ [33] The English people have given us a deadly

17. Gebhardt notes that Spinoza's observations here are aimed at the monarchical ambitions of the Orangist party (V, 101). His analysis is reminiscent of Machiavelli's *Prince* v (or *Discourses* I, 26). Cf. TP v, 7.

18. Gebhardt notes similar observations in Machiavelli (*Discourses* I, 16, III, 6) and refers us also to TP v, 7, as showing that Spinoza was aware of the similarity (V, 101). Droetto/Giancotti has a helpful treatment of the discussion of tyrannicide in Bodin (*Republic* II, 5), Grotius (*De jure* I, iv), and Hobbes (*Leviathan* xviii).

19. Cf. xvii, 110.

20. An allusion to a slogan in Van Hove 1661, I, iii, 1 (p. 232): *mutatio tyranni non tyrannidis ablatio*, changing the tyrant does not take away the tyranny. Spinoza will cite this motto again in TP viii, 9 (Wernham).

example of this truth, when they sought reasons for removing a monarch from their midst with an appearance of right.²¹ When they had removed him, they were completely unable to change the form of the state. After much blood had been spilled, they reached the point where they hailed a new monarch under another name, as if the whole issue had only been about the name! The new monarch could survive only if he completely destroyed the royal family, killed the king's friends, or anyone suspected being his friend, and upset the tranquillity of peace, so suitable for generating murmurings, with a war, so that ordinary people, preoccupied with new crises, would turn its thoughts about royal murder in a different direction. [34] Too late the people realized that the only thing they had accomplished for the well-being of their country was to violate the right of a legitimate king and change everything for the worse. So as soon as they could, they decided to retrace their steps; they did not rest until they saw things restored to their original condition.²²

[35] Perhaps someone will object that the example of the Romans shows that a people can easily remove a tyrant from their midst.²³ I myself, however, think this example completely confirms our opinion. For though the Roman people were far more easily able to remove a tyrant from their midst and to change the form of the state—they themselves had the right to choose the king and his successor, and they had not yet become accustomed to obeying kings—rebellious and infamous men, they killed three of the six kings they had before—still all they accomplished was to elect a number of tyrants in place of one, tyrants who always had them torn apart wretchedly by both external and

21. At the end of the English Civil War the victorious parliamentary leaders tried and beheaded Charles I in 1649. During a period of ineffective rule by a Parliamentary Council, Cromwell, the leader of the army during the war, gradually took control, assuming the title of Lord Protector in 1653 but rejecting the title of king.

22. Once again Spinoza invites comparison with Machiavelli (e.g., in *Discourses* III, 4). But his account of British history in the period after the execution of Charles seems rather misleading. Cromwell survived without destroying the royal family, whose heir returned to the throne in 1660. He did have to put down royalist revolts in Ireland and Scotland, and the war in Ireland was especially bloody. But he died of natural causes in 1658, and was succeeded by his son, who might have ruled longer had he possessed his father's ability. The war against the Dutch in this period seems to have been motivated primarily by conflicts over trade and a concern that the Dutch not interfere in British politics, not by a desire to distract the people with new crises. (See Firth 1947, Ch. 18) Gebhardt has an interesting discussion (V, 101–3) of the sources which may have helped to form Spinoza's judgment: De la Court's *Polityke Weegschaal*, and a Dutch translation (*Historie van zijn Majesteyt, Karel de II*) of an 'ultramonarchist' English history of the period.

23. Here Spinoza differs from Machiavelli, who held (*Discourses* I, 17) that the Roman people were easily able to get rid of tyrants when (as under the Tarquins) the people were not yet corrupt, but that after the deaths of Caesar, Caligula, and Nero, the people were too corrupt to return to freedom. ALM have instructive annotation.

internal wars, until in the end the state gave way again to a monarchy, changed only in name, as in England.²⁴

[36] As for the States of Holland, so far as we know they never had Kings, but only counts, to whom the right to rule was never transferred.

[III/228] For as the Sovereign States of Holland themselves made generally known in the document they published at the time of the count of Leicester,²⁵ they have always reserved for themselves the authority to remind the counts of their duty, and retained for themselves the 'power to defend this authority of theirs and the freedom of the citizens, to
5 avenge themselves on the counts if they degenerated into tyrants, and to check them in such a way that they could accomplish nothing without the permission and endorsement of the states. [37] From this it follows that the states always had the right of supreme majesty, a right the last count tried to usurp.²⁶ So by no means did they fail in their duty to
10 him when they restored their original state, which had almost been lost.

These examples completely confirm what we have said:

[vi] that the form of each state must necessarily be retained and that it cannot be changed without a danger that the whole state will be ruined.

These are the things I thought worth noting here.

24. Apparently a reference to the fact that Augustus was called *princeps* rather than *rex*, and Cromwell *Lord Protector* rather than *King*.

25. In 1575, the States General of the emerging Dutch Republic offered sovereignty over the Netherlands to Queen Elizabeth, in return for England's assistance in the revolt against Spain. Elizabeth declined to accept sovereignty, but did offer aid, on the condition that her nominee, Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, be the military and political leader of the Republic, with the title of "governor-general," and that England be allocated seats in the Council of State. Though this arrangement lasted only until 1587, Israel (1995, 220) has described it as "a formative episode in the history of the Dutch Republic." The document Spinoza refers to, "A Short Exposition of the rights exercised by the knights, nobles and towns of Holland and West Friesland," was first published in 1587, and republished in 1650 by Van den Enden (ALM). Gebhardt quotes most of it (V, 104–8). Kossman and Mellink provide an English translation of the whole document (Kossman and Mellink 1974, 274–81).

26. The reference is to Philip II of Spain (Gebhardt V, 109). For more on this, see TP ix, 14, and the annotation there. Grotius had argued for the sovereignty of the States in his *De antiquitate Reipublicae Batavae* (ALM), on which see Israel 1995, 421–22.

CHAPTER XIX

*That the right concerning sacred matters
belongs completely to the supreme 'powers,
and that the external practice of Religion
must be accommodated to the peace of the Republic,
if we want to obey God Rightly*

[1] When I said above that only those who have sovereignty have a
20 right to do all things, and that all law depends solely on their decree,
I meant not only civil law, but also sacred law. For they must be both
the interpreters and the defenders of this law also. I want to note this
explicitly here, and to treat it in detail in this Chapter, because a great
many people flatly deny that this right concerning sacred matters
25 belongs to the supreme 'powers, and don't wish to recognize them as
the interpreters of divine law.¹ [2] That's why they assume for them-
selves a license to censure them, to expose them to scorn, and even to
excommunicate them from the Church (as Ambrose once did to the
emperor Theodosius).² But in doing this they divide the sovereignty.

1. Early in the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic was torn apart by a bitter controversy between the Remonstrants and the Counter-Remonstrants. The primary issue involved questions of grace and predestination, but the parties also disagreed over the proper role of the state in religious matters, with the Remonstrants advocating the state's authority in the appointment of ministers, the calling of synods, and the resolution of religious disputes, and the Counter-Remonstrants advocating a policy which gave the church the right to operate independently of the state. In evaluating Spinoza's support for the Remonstrant position it's important to realize that both parties accepted the status of the Dutch Reformed Church as the publicly supported religion of the Republic, membership in which was required of those holding public office. The difference was that the Remonstrants did not wish, as their opponents did, to require strict adherence to Calvinist teachings for the ministers and members of the church. See Israel 1995, 421–32; Nelson 2010, ch. 3; and Voogt 2009.

2. According to a story in de Voragine's thirteenth-century *Legenda aurea* (kept alive in seventeenth-century paintings by Rubens and Van Dyck), in 390 Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, refused communion to Theodosius until the emperor did penance for the massacre of five thousand rebellious citizens in Thessalonica. In fact, it seems, this is indeed a legend. On that occasion Ambrose behaved more diplomatically. (See Drake 2000, 441–48.) The story conflates what happened in 390 with an incident in 388 when a mob, led by the local bishop and a group of monks, destroyed a synagogue in Callicum. Theodosius ordered that the rioters be punished, and the bishop be made to pay for rebuilding the synagogue. Ambrose challenged this order, arguing that it was no crime to burn a synagogue (“a site of perfidy, a house of impiety, a refuge of madness, which God himself has condemned”) and that it would violate the offenders' religious

Indeed, they're looking for a way to become sovereign themselves, as
 30 we'll see later in this Chapter.

First, though, I want to show that Religion receives the force of law only from the decree of those who have the right to rule, that God has no special kingdom over men except through those who have
 [III/229] sovereignty, that Religious worship and the exercise of piety must be accommodated to the peace and utility of the Republic, and hence, must be determined only by the supreme 'powers, who must also be its interpreters.

[3] Note that I'm speaking specifically about the exercise of piety and about the external practice of religion, not about piety itself and
 5 the internal worship of God, *or* the means by which the mind is disposed, internally, to worship God wholeheartedly.³ For (as we showed at the end of Chapter 7) each person is his own master with respect to the internal worship of God and piety itself. He cannot transfer that control to anyone else.

[4] Furthermore, I think what I understand here by God's Kingdom
 10 is established sufficiently by Chapter 14. For there we showed that a person fulfills God's law if he practices justice and loving-kindness according to God's command. From this it follows that God's Kingdom exists wherever justice and loving-kindness have the force of law and of a command. [5] I see no difference here whether it's by the natural light or by revelation that God teaches and commands the true practice
 15 of justice and loving-kindness. It doesn't matter how that practice is revealed, so long as it obtains the supreme right and is the supreme law for men.

[6] Suppose I now show that justice and loving-kindness can acquire the force of law and of a command only from the right of the state. Then since the right of the state belongs only to the supreme 'powers,
 20 it will be easy for me to conclude that Religion acquires the force of law only by the decree of those who have the right to rule, and that God has no special kingdom over men except through those who have sovereignty.

[7] That the practice of justice and loving-kindness acquires the force of law only from the right of the state is evident from what we've said above. For we've shown in Chapter 16 that in the state of nature

liberty if they were made to rebuild the synagogue. This was his ground for refusing the emperor communion. See Ambrose 2005, 95–123. Calvin approved Theodosius' act of submission, though it's unclear that Ambrose's action met his criteria for legitimate excommunication. Cf. *Institutes* IV, xii, 7, with IV, xi, 6.

3. A standard Erastian qualification of the state's rights in matters of religion. See Grotius 1647, III, 1; and Hobbes, *Leviathan* xxvi, 41; xl, 2; xlii, 11.

reason has no more right than appetite, but that both those who live
 25 according to the laws of appetite and those who live according to the
 laws of reason have the right to do whatever they can. [8] That's why
 we couldn't conceive of sin in the natural state, nor of God as a judge
 punishing men for their sins, but could only conceive that all things
 30 proceed according to laws common to the whole of nature, that (as
 Solomon puts it)⁴ the same outcome happens to both the righteous
 and the impious, the pure and the impure, and that there is no place
 there for justice or for loving-kindness. But for the teachings of true
 reason, i.e. (as we showed in Chapter 4, concerning the divine law),
 the divine teachings themselves, to have the force of law absolutely, it
 [III/230] was necessary for each person to surrender his natural right, and for
 everyone to transfer it either to everyone, or to some, or to one. Not
 till then did we come to know what justice and injustice, equity and
 inequity were.

[9] Justice, then, and all the teachings of true reason, without excep-
 5 tion (and hence, loving-kindness toward one's neighbor), acquire the
 force of law and of a command only by the right of the state, i.e. (by
 what we showed in the same Chapter), only by the decree of those
 who have the right to rule. And because (as I've already shown) God's
 kingdom consists only in the law of justice and loving-kindness, *or* of
 true Religion, it follows, as we claimed, that God has no kingdom over
 10 men except through those who have sovereignty.

It doesn't matter, I say, whether we conceive Religion to be revealed
 by the light of nature or by the Prophetic light. [10] For the demon-
 stration is universal, since religion is the same, and has equally been
 revealed by God, no matter what way we suppose that men become
 aware of it. So even for Prophetically revealed religion to have the
 15 force of law among the Hebrews, it was necessary for each of them to
 surrender first his natural right, and for everyone to resolve, according
 to a common agreement, that they would obey only those commands
 which were revealed to them Prophetically by God, in exactly the same
 way as we have shown happens in a democratic state where everyone
 resolves, by a common agreement, to live only according to the dictate
 20 of reason.⁵ [11] And though the Hebrews in addition transferred their

4. A recurring theme in Ecclesiastes (e.g., 2:14b–15, 7:15, 8:14, 9:1–3), whose attribution to Solomon Spinoza typically accepts, though in x, 5, where he might have been expected to discuss the question of authorship, he does not defend the attribution. Perhaps he prefers to leave the traditional attribution standing because he wants to invoke, in favor of potentially controversial propositions he wishes to see accepted, the authority of a king noted for his wisdom.

5. Cf. xvii, 33–36. Both Exod. 19:7–8 and Deut. 5:27 represent the covenant at Mount Sinai as involving the people's promising obedience.

right to God, they could do this more in thought than in deed. For really—as we’ve seen above [xvii, 32–36]—they retained the right of command absolutely until they transferred it to Moses. After that he remained king absolutely and only through him did God reign over the Hebrews.

25 [12] Again, the fact that religion acquires the force of law only from the right of the state also explains why Moses was not able to inflict any punishment on those who violated the Sabbath before the covenant, and hence, while they were still their own masters (see Exodus 16:27). After the covenant (see Numbers 15:36), i.e., after each person surrendered
30 his natural right, the Sabbath acquired the force of a command from the right of the state.

[13] Finally, this is also the reason why revealed Religion ceased to have the force of law when the Hebrew state was destroyed. For we can’t have any doubt that as soon as the Hebrews transferred their right to the King of Babylon, God’s kingdom and the divine right immediately ceased. [14] For by that act they completely abolished the covenant by which they had promised to obey God in everything he told them to
[III/231] do. This had been the foundation of God’s kingdom. They could no longer stand by that covenant, because from that time on they were no longer their own masters (as they had been in the wilderness or in their own land), but were under the control of the King of Babylon,
5 whom they were bound to obey in everything (as we showed in Ch. 16).

Jeremiah also explicitly warns them of this: “Take thought for the peace of the city to which I have led you as captives,” he says, “for its welfare will be your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7).⁶ [15] Because they were captives, they couldn’t look after the peace of that city as ministers of
10 state, but only as slaves,⁷ by showing themselves to be obedient in all things, to avoid rebellions, and by observing the rights and laws of the

6. The Jewish people have often taken Jeremiah’s letter to the captives in Babylon (Jer. 29:4–23) as a guide to their proper conduct in the Diaspora. Cf. SC, Jer. 29:4ff. Jeremiah, though, prophesied an exile limited to seventy years, not permanent exile. Zac (1965, 159; 1979, 149) argued forcefully that Spinoza takes the passage in Jeremiah out of context, that it does not show that the covenant with God was abolished when the people went into captivity, or that they were obliged to change their religion in their new state. Calvin used this text to defend an apparently unconditional duty of obedience to kings, even if they were “abominable and cruel tyrants” (ALM, citing Calvin, *Institutes* IV, xx, 27–28).

7. The Latin term used here, *servus*, is ambiguous between “slave” and “servant.” Though Spinoza clearly thinks of the Babylonian captives as slaves here, it’s not equally clear that he’s right to do so, given his definition of slavery in xvi, 32–33. The SC comment on Jer. 29:5 points out that “the exiles in Babylon did not suffer the restrictions . . . imposed upon Jews in many countries in later times. They were permitted to own land and engage in agriculture.”

state, even if they were very different from the laws they had become accustomed to in their own country, etc.

[16] From all these considerations it follows most clearly that among the Hebrews Religion acquired the force of law only from the right of the state. Once the state was destroyed, [religion] could no longer
15 be considered the command of a particular state, but only a universal teaching of reason. “Of reason,” I say, for Universal Religion had not yet come to be known from Revelation. [17] We infer, then, without qualification, that, whether religion is revealed by the natural light or by the Prophetic light, it acquires the force of a command only by the decree of those who have the right to rule, and that God has no
20 special kingdom over men except through those who have sovereignty.

[18] This also follows, and is understood more clearly, from what we said in Ch. 4 [§§22–37]. For there we showed that all God’s decrees involve eternal truth and necessity, and that God cannot be conceived as giving laws to men like a prince or a lawgiver. [19] Hence, the divine
25 teachings, whether revealed by the natural light or by the Prophetic light, don’t get the force of a command directly from God, but must get it from (or by the mediation of) those who have the right to rule and make decrees. It’s only by their mediation that we can conceive God as reigning over men and directing human affairs according to justice and equity.

30 This is also confirmed by experience itself. [20] We don’t find any traces of divine justice except where the just rule. Otherwise (to repeat again the words of Solomon),⁸ we see that both the just and the unjust, the pure and the impure, get the same result. Indeed, this has caused doubts about divine providence among a great many people who thought that God reigns directly over men and directs the whole of nature to
[III/232] their use.

[21] Therefore, since both experience and reason establish that divine law depends only on the decree of the supreme ‘powers, it follows that they must also be its interpreters. We’ll now see in what way this is true. It’s time for us to show that external religious worship and every
5 exercise of piety must be accommodated to the peace and preservation of the republic, if we want to obey God properly. Once we’ve demonstrated this, we’ll easily understand how the supreme ‘powers are the interpreters of religion and piety.

[22] It’s certain that piety toward a person’s country is the supreme
10 piety he can render. For if the state is destroyed, nothing good can remain, but everything is at risk. Only anger and impiety rule, and

8. Eccles. 9:2, previously cited in vi, 33, and xix, 8.

everyone lives in the greatest possible fear. From this it follows that you can't do anything pious to your neighbor which doesn't become impious if some harm to the republic as a whole follows from it. Conversely, you can't do anything impious to anyone which shouldn't be ascribed
 15 to piety if it's done to preserve the republic.⁹

[23] So, if someone quarrels with me and wants to take my tunic, it's pious to give him my cloak also [Matthew 5:40, Luke 6:29]. But when one judges that this is harmful to the preservation of the Republic, it is, on the contrary, pious to call him to judgment, even if he's to be condemned to death. That's why Manlius Torquatus is honored: because
 20 he valued the well-being of the people more than piety toward his son.¹⁰

[24] Since this is so, it follows that the well-being of the people is the supreme law.¹¹ All laws, both human and divine, must be accommodated to this. But since it's the duty of the supreme 'power alone to determine what's necessary for the well-being of the whole people
 25 and the security of the state, and to command what it has judged to be necessary, it follows that it's the duty of the supreme 'power alone to determine in what way each person must devote himself to his neighbor in accordance with piety, i.e., in what way each person is bound to obey God.

30 [25] From these considerations we understand clearly in what way the supreme 'powers are the interpreters of religion, and again, that no one can obey God rightly if he does not accommodate to the public advantage the practice of piety by which everyone is bound, and hence, if he does not obey all the decrees of the supreme 'power. [26] For since we are bound by God's command to cherish everyone, without exception, in accordance with piety, and to harm no one, it follows that no one is permitted to aid one person at the expense of another, much less
 [III/233] at the expense of the whole state. So, in keeping with God's command, no one can cherish his neighbor in accordance with piety, unless he accommodates piety and religion to the public advantage. [27] But no private person can know what is useful to the republic except by the decrees of the supreme 'powers, who are the only ones whose job it is
 5 to treat public business. Therefore, no one can practice piety rightly, nor obey God, unless he obeys all the decrees of the supreme 'power.

9. Agreeing with Machiavelli, *Discourses* III, 41 (ALM).

10. Manlius Torquatus here is Titus Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus, who was a consul in 340 B.C.E., and had his son executed for disobeying orders in battle (Cicero, *De finibus* I, vii, 23). Wernham cites Livy VIII, vii. ALM note that his example was cited also in Sallust (*Catiline* 9 and 52), Valerius Maximus II, vii, 6, and De la Court, *Politieke Discoursen*, 60. To this list we may add Machiavelli, *Discourses* III, 22 and 34.

11. Cf. xvi, 34. By the seventeenth century, this Ciceronian maxim had become a commonplace of political theory (endorsed by, among others, Hobbes in *Leviathan* xxx, 1).

[28] This is also confirmed by practice. For if the supreme 'power has judged someone punishable by death or an enemy—whether a citizen or a foreigner, a private person or someone who has command
 10 over others—it is not permissible for any subject to give aid to that person. So though the Hebrews were told that each person should love his neighbor as himself (see Leviticus 19:17–18), nevertheless they were bound to inform the Judge of anyone who had broken the law (see Leviticus 5:1 and Deuteronomy 13:8–9),¹² and to kill him if he was
 15 judged to be punishable by death (Deuteronomy 17:7).

[29] Again, for the Hebrews to be able to preserve the freedom they had acquired, and have absolute control over the lands they occupied, it was necessary (as we've shown in Ch. 17 [§§76–81]) for them to adapt religion only to their own state, and to separate themselves from the other nations. Therefore it was said to them: *love your neighbor and hate*
 20 *your enemy* (Matthew 5:43).¹³ [30] But after they lost their sovereignty and were led into captivity in Babylon, Jeremiah taught them to look after the welfare (even) of that city to which they had been led as captives.¹⁴ And after Christ saw that they were to be dispersed throughout the whole world, he taught them that they should treat absolutely everyone
 25 with piety. All these things show, with utmost clarity, that religion was always adapted to the advantage of the republic.

[31] Suppose someone asks now “By what right could Christ's disciples, who were private men, preach religion?” I say they did this by right of the 'power they'd received from Christ over unclean Spirits
 30 (see Matthew 10:1). [32] At the end of Ch. 16, I explicitly warned that everyone is bound to keep faith even with a Tyrant, except someone to whom God, by a certain revelation, had promised special aid against the Tyrant. So no one is allowed to take this as an example, unless he also has the 'power to perform miracles. This is also clear from the
 [III/234] fact that Christ told his disciples that they shouldn't fear those who kill the body (see Matthew 10:28). [33] If he'd said this to everyone,

12. Deut. 13:8–9 does not seem good support for the point Spinoza is making here. It is concerned not with law-breaking in general, but with incitement to idolatry, and prescribes, not merely reporting the offender, but killing him (or her). Deut. 17:7 also seems to be concerned with idolatry (the act itself, not mere incitement).

13. Arguably it's problematic to cite New Testament criticism of the Old Testament as an authority on the OT teachings. There's no problem finding OT evidence that the Hebrews were commanded to love their neighbors (including resident aliens and strangers). See Leviticus 19:17–18, 19:34, Deut. 10:18–19. The problem, as ALM note, is to find a passage in which the Hebrews were commanded to hate their enemies. But it would appear that Spinoza thought there were passages in the Psalms which encouraged hatred of other nations. See xvii, 77, and the annotation there. Deut. 30:6–7 seems similar in spirit.

14. Jer. 29:7, discussed above in §§14–15.

the state would be established in vain, and that saying of Solomon—*my son, fear God and the king* (Proverbs 24:21)—would have been impious.

5 That's far from true. So it must be confessed that the authority Christ gave his disciples he gave to them only, and that others cannot take them as an example.

[34] I won't pause to discuss the arguments of my opponents,¹⁵ by which they claim to separate sacred right from civil right, and contend that the supreme 'power possesses only the latter, whereas the universal
10 church possesses the former. Those arguments are so frivolous they don't deserve to be refuted. [35] One thing, though, I can't pass over in silence: how wretchedly they're deceived when they try to confirm this seditious opinion (if I may be excused for speaking rather harshly)¹⁶ by appealing to the example of the high Priest of the Hebrews, who previously possessed the right of administering sacred matters—as if
15 the Priests had not received that right from Moses. As we've shown above, he kept the supreme authority for himself alone, and they could also be deprived of that right by his decree. [36] For he himself chose not only Aaron, but also his son, Eleazar, and his grandson, Phinehas, and gave them the authority to administer the priesthood.¹⁷ Afterward
20 the Priests kept this authority, but in such a way that they seemed to be representatives of Moses, i.e., of the supreme 'power. For as we've already shown [xvii, 38], Moses did not choose any successor to the sovereignty, but distributed all his functions so that his successors seemed to be his deputies, who were administering the state as if the king were absent, not dead.

25 [37] In the second state the Priests held this right absolutely, after they had acquired the right to rule along with the priesthood. So the right of the priesthood always depended on the edict of the supreme 'power, and the Priests didn't have the right of priesthood unless they also had the right to rule. [38] Indeed, the right concerning sacred matters was absolutely in the possession of the Kings (this will be evident from what I'll say shortly, at the end of the Chapter), except for
30 one thing: they were not permitted to engage in administering sacred rites in the temple, because everyone who did not descend from Aaron

15. The primary opponents would have been the orthodox Calvinists (Counter-Remonstrants) who maintained the independence of the spiritual authority (see Renier 1944, I, 45). But as Wernham notes, this was also the position of the Roman Catholic Church. He suggests that Spinoza may have felt it unnecessary to respond to these opponents because he thought Grotius had already done so satisfactorily.

16. Wernham calls attention to Hobbes' use of similar language in DCv xii.

17. Cf. Exod. 28, 29; Lev. 8–10. But in both passages God seems to make the choice, not Moses.

was considered unconsecrated. But this, of course, has no place in a Christian state.

[39] So we can't doubt that now sacred matters—whose administration requires a special moral character, but does not require membership in a particular family, so that the rulers are not excluded from it as
[III/235] unconsecrated—are subject only to the right of the supreme 'powers. Without their authority or permission no one has the right and 'power to administer these things, to choose their ministers, to determine and stabilize the foundations of the Church and its teaching, to judge concerning morals and acts of piety, to excommunicate someone from or
5 receive someone into the Church, nor, finally, to provide for the poor.

[40] These things are demonstrated, not only to be true—we've already done that—but also to be most necessary to the preservation of religion itself, and to that of the republic. For everyone knows how
10 highly the people value the right and authority regarding sacred matters, and how much weight everyone attaches to the utterances of the one who has it. So we can say that the person who has this authority has the most powerful control over their hearts.

[41] Anyone who claims to take this authority away from the supreme 'powers is trying to divide the sovereignty. This will necessarily give
15 rise to quarrels and disagreements which can never be restrained, as happened before between the Kings and Priests of the Hebrews. Indeed, anyone who wants to take this authority away from the supreme 'powers is trying (as we've already said) to make himself sovereign. [42] For what can the supreme powers decide, if this right is denied to them?
20 Certainly nothing concerning war and peace, nor any other business, if they are bound to wait for the opinion of someone else, who is to tell them whether what they judge to be advantageous is pious or not. On the contrary, everything will happen according to the decree of that person who has the right of judging and deciding what is pious or impious, sacrilegious or not.

[43] Every age has seen examples of this. I'll discuss only one, which
25 is a paradigm for all.¹⁸ Because this right was conceded unconditionally to the Roman Pontiff, after a while he gradually began to get all the Kings in his 'power, until he rose to the peak of sovereignty. Afterward the monarchs, and especially the German Emperors, could do nothing to diminish his authority even the slightest bit. On the contrary,
30 what they did increased it many times. [44] But this thing which no

18. ALM note that Spinoza is here using a traditional argument which can be found in the Remonstrant author Johannes Uytenbogaert, who used it to show that the power of the Pope could be deduced from Counter-Remonstrant theses. See Uytenbogaert 1610, 37ff.

Monarch could do, either with iron or with fire, Ecclesiastics could do just by the might of their pens. From this example we can easily see the force and power of this authority, and see how necessary it is for the supreme 'powers to reserve it for themselves.

[45] But if we want to consider the things noted in the preceding
 [III/236] Chapter, we'll see that this [right of the supreme 'powers in sacred matters] is also conducive, in no small measure, to the increase of religion and piety. For we've seen above that though the Prophets themselves were endowed with a divine virtue, still, because they were private men, the freedom they showed in warning, chiding and reproaching
 5 people aggravated them more than it corrected them. On the other hand, when the Kings warned or criticized the people, they were easily turned in a different direction. And again, we've seen that kings—and with them, almost the whole people—often turned away from religion merely because this right did not belong to them unconditionally. It's well-known that for the same reason this happened quite often even in Christian states.

10 [46] But here perhaps someone will ask me: "Who, then, will there be to defend piety with right when those who have sovereignty are willing to be impious? Are those same people even then to be considered its interpreters?" In reply I ask him: "What if the Ecclesiastics—who are also men and private persons, responsible only for taking care of their own affairs—or the others whom he wants to have the right concern-
 15 ing sacred matters—are willing to be impious? Are they even then to be considered its interpreters?"

[47] Indeed, it's certain that if those who have sovereignty want to follow their own interests, everything will deteriorate, sacred affairs and secular ones, whether the authorities have control over sacred matters or not. But this will happen far more quickly if private men are pre-
 20 pared to defend divine right seditiously. [48] So absolutely nothing is gained by denying this right to the supreme 'powers; on the contrary, it only makes matters worse. For denying them this right makes them necessarily impious (as were the Kings of the Hebrews to whom this right was not absolutely permitted). A harm and evil to the whole Republic, which would have been uncertain and contingent, becomes certain and necessary.

25 [49] Therefore, whether we consider the truth of the matter, or the security of the state, or the increase of piety, we're forced to maintain that even divine right, *or* the right concerning sacred matters, depends absolutely on the decree of the supreme 'powers, and that they are its interpreters and defenders. From this it follows that those people
 30 are ministers of the word of God who teach the people piety by the

authority of the supreme 'powers, as it's been accommodated, by their decree, to the public advantage.

[50] What remains now is to indicate the reason why there's always been a dispute about this right in Christian states, although, so far as I know, the Hebrews never quarreled about it. Certainly it could seem very unnatural that there's always been a question about something so
 [III/237] evident and necessary, and that the supreme 'powers never had this right without controversy, indeed, never had it without great danger of rebellions and harm to religion. [51] Undoubtedly, if we could not assign any definite cause for this, I might be easily persuaded that everything
 5 I have shown in this Chapter is only theoretical, *or*, an example of that kind of speculation which could never have any use.

But anyone who considers the origins of the Christian religion will find the cause of this completely clear. [52] It was not kings who first taught the Christian religion, but private men who were accustomed for a long time—against the will of those who had sovereignty and
 10 whose subjects they were—to address meetings in private Churches, to establish and administer sacred offices, to manage everything by themselves, and to make decrees without any concern for the sovereign.

[53] Moreover, when religion began to be introduced into the state, after many years had passed, it was Ecclesiastics who had to teach the
 15 Emperors this religion, as they had defined it. That's why they were easily able to succeed in being recognized as its teachers and interpreters—and moreover, as the pastors of the Church, and as it were, the deputies of God. And the Ecclesiastics looked out very well for their own interests by prohibiting marriage to the supreme ministers of the Church and the supreme interpreter of religion, so that afterward Christian Kings would not be able to take this authority for themselves.¹⁹

20 [54] Furthermore, they had increased the doctrines of Religion to such a great number, and confused them so much with Philosophy, that the supreme interpreter of Religion had to be a supreme Philosopher and Theologian, and had to have time for a great many useless speculations, which can fall to the lot only of private men who have abundant leisure.²⁰

25 [55] But among the Hebrews the situation was very different. For their Church began at the same time their state did, and Moses, who had the rule absolutely, taught the people religion, ordained sacred ministries, and chose the ministers for them [cf. xix, 36]. That's why royal authority was valued so highly among the people, and why the

19. Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan* xii, 32; xlv, 33–34; xlvii, 10.

20. Cf. the criticism of mixing philosophy and religion at the end of Ch. xi (§§21–24).

30 Kings had such a great right concerning sacred matters. [56] For though no one after Moses' death had absolute sovereignty, still the ruler (as we've already shown)²¹ had the right to make decrees both about sacred matters and about all others. From then on, to be taught religion and piety, the people were no more bound to go to the Priest than to the supreme Judge. (See Deuteronomy 17:9, 11.)

[III/238] [57] Finally, though the Kings did not have a right equal to that of Moses, still almost the whole system and selection of the sacred ministry depended on their decision. For David organized the whole process of building the Temple (see 1 Chronicles 28:11–12 etc.), and then chose from all the Levites 24,000 to have charge of the temple services, and
5 6,000 from whom Judges and officers were chosen, 4,000 gatekeepers, and finally, 4,000 to play on instruments. (See 1 Chronicles 23:4–5.) [58] Next he divided them into units (whose leaders he also chose) so that each unit would perform its functions in its own time, taking turns with the others. (See 1 Chronicles 23:6.) Similarly he divided the
10 priests into as many units.

[59] But so that I don't have to recount all these things separately, I refer the reader to 2 Chronicles 8:13, where it is said that *the worship of God, as Moses had established it, was administered in the temple according to Solomon's command*, and in v. 14, *that he* (Solomon) *established units of priests for his ministries, and of Levites, etc., according to the command of the man of God, David*. And finally, in v. 15 the Historian testifies *that they did not depart from the command imposed by the King on the priests and Levites in any respect, not even in administering the treasures*. From all this, and from the other histories of the Kings, it follows with utmost clarity that the whole practice of religion and the whole sacred ministry
20 depended entirely on the King's command.

[60] But when I said above that the Kings did not have, as Moses did, the right to choose the high priest, or to consult God directly, or to condemn the Prophets who prophesied to them during their lifetime, I said this only because the Prophets had the authority to choose a new
25 King, and forgive regicide, but not because they were permitted to call the King to judgment, or had a legal right to act against him, if he dared to do something against the laws.^{22**} [61] So, if there had been no Prophets who, by a special revelation, could safely grant forgiveness for regicide, they would have had a complete right over absolutely all

21. Presumably the reference is to xvii, 37–61 (though it's not clear that the history recounted there supports as extensive an authority for political leaders as Spinoza wishes to argue for in this chapter).

22. **[ADN. XXXIX] Here you should attend especially to what we have said about right in Ch. 16.

matters, both sacred and civil. [62] Hence, today's supreme 'powers, who
 30 have no Prophets and are not bound by law to accept any (for they
 are not subject to the laws of the Hebrews), have this right absolutely,
 even if they are not celibate; and they will always retain it, provided
 only that they do not allow the doctrines of Religion to be increased
 to a great number or to be confused with the sciences.

[III/239]

CHAPTER XX

*It is shown that in a Free Republic
 everyone is permitted
 to think what he wishes and to say what he thinks¹*

[1] If it were as easy to command men's minds as it is their tongues,²
 5 every ruler would govern in safety and no rule would be violent.
 Everyone would live according to the mentality of the rulers; only in
 accordance with their decree would people judge what is true or false,
 good or evil, right or wrong. [2] But as we noted at the beginning of
 Chapter 17 [xvii, 2], it can't happen that a mind should be absolutely
 10 subject to the control of someone else. Indeed, no one can transfer to
 another person his natural right, *or* faculty, of reasoning freely, and of
 judging concerning anything whatever. Nor can anyone be compelled
 to do this. [3] That's why rule over minds is considered violent, and
 why the supreme majesty seems to wrong its subjects and to usurp
 15 their rights whenever it tries to prescribe to everyone what they must
 embrace as true and reject as false, and, further, by what opinions
 everyone's mind ought to be moved in its devotion to God. These
 things are subject to each individual's control. No one can surrender
 that even if he wants to.

[4] I confess that someone can get prior control of another person's
 20 judgment in many ways, some of them almost incredible. So though
 that person does not directly command the other person's judgment,
 it can still depend so much on what he says that we can rightly say
 that to that extent it is subject to his control.³ But whatever ingenuity

1. Another allusion to Tacitus, *Histories* I, i, 4. Cf. III/12, 247.

2. An allusion to Quintus Curtius VIII, v, 5: Alexander "wished, not only to be called, but to be believed to be, the son of Jupiter, as if he could command minds just as he could tongues" (ALM).

3. Cf. TP ii, 11.

has been able to achieve in this matter, it has never reached the point where men do not learn from experience that each person is plentifully supplied with his own faculty of judgment and that men's minds differ
 25 as much as their palates do.⁴ [5] Though Moses had gotten the greatest prior control of the judgment of his people, not by deception, but by a divine virtue, with the result that he was believed to be divine, and to speak and do everything by divine inspiration, still he was not able to escape murmuring and perverse interpretations.⁵ Much less are other Monarchs able to do this. If this were conceivable at all, it would be
 30 in a monarchic state, not in a democratic one, where all the people, or a great many of them, govern as a body. I think the reason for this is evident to everyone.

[III/240] [6] Therefore, however much the supreme 'powers are believed to have a right over all things, and to be the interpreters of right and piety, they'll still never be able to stop men from making their own judgment about everything according to their own mentality, and from having,
 5 to that extent, this or that affect. It's true, of course, that by right they can consider as enemies anyone who doesn't think absolutely as they do in every matter. But what we're discussing now is not what their right is, but what's advantageous. [7] I grant that by right they can rule with the utmost violence, and condemn citizens to death for the slightest of
 10 reasons. But everyone will deny that they can do these things without detriment to the judgment of sound reason. Indeed, because they can't do these things without great danger to the whole state, we can also deny that they have the absolute power to do such things. So we can deny also that they can do them with absolute right. For we've shown that the right of the supreme 'powers is determined by their power.

15 [8] If, then, no one can surrender his freedom of judging and thinking what he wishes, but everyone, by the greatest natural right, is master of his own thoughts, it follows that if the supreme 'powers in a republic try to make men say nothing but what they prescribe, no matter how different and contrary their opinions, they will get only
 20 the most unfortunate result. Not even the wisest know how to keep quiet, not to mention ordinary people. [9] It's a common vice of men to confide their judgments to others, even if secrecy is needed.⁶ So a

4. Cf. E I App., II/83/5–9.

5. The Pentateuch repeatedly reports the people as complaining about the hardships of their life in the wilderness. Cf. Exod. 15:22–25, 16:2–3, 17:2; Num. 11:1–6, 16:12–14, 20:2–4, 21:4–5. We may have a reminiscence here of ch. vi of Machiavelli's *Prince*, where Moses is cited as an example of someone who acquired a new principality by his skill (*virtù*).

6. Proietti has noted allusions here to various passages in Terence: *Adelphi* 342, 953; *Eumuchus* 128 (ALM).

government which denies everyone the freedom to say and teach what he thinks will be most violent. But when a government grants everyone this freedom, its rule will be moderate.

25 [10] Still, we can't deny that majesty can be harmed by words as well as deeds. So if it's impossible to take this freedom away from subjects completely, it's also disastrous to grant it completely. Our task here, then, is to inquire how far this freedom can and must be granted to each person consistently with the peace of the republic and the right
30 of the supreme 'powers. As I noted at the beginning of Chapter 16, pursuing this inquiry is my main purpose in these final chapters.

[11] From the foundations of the Republic explained above it follows most clearly that its ultimate end is not to dominate, restraining men by fear, and making them subject to another's control, but on the
[III/241] contrary to free each person from fear, so that he can live securely, as far as possible, i.e., so that he retains to the utmost his natural right to exist and operate without harm to himself or anyone else.

[12] The end of the Republic, I say, is not to change men from rational beings into beasts or automata, but to enable their minds and
5 bodies to perform their functions safely, to enable them to use their reason freely, and not to clash with one another in hatred, anger or deception, or deal inequitably with one another. So the end of the Republic is really freedom.⁷

[13] Next, we saw [xvi, 37–38] that to form a Republic this one thing was necessary: that either everyone, or some people, or one
10 person, possessed the whole 'power of making decrees. For since the free judgment of men varies a lot, and everyone thinks he alone knows everything, and it can't happen that they all think alike and speak with one voice, people could not live peaceably together unless each one has surrendered his right to act solely according to the decision of his
15 own mind.

[14] Each person, then, surrenders only his right to act according to his own decision, but not his right to reason and judge. So no one can act contrary to the decree of the supreme 'powers without infringing on their right. But anyone can think, and judge, and consequently also speak, without infringing on their right, provided just that he only speaks

7. ALM note that though Spinoza is highly critical of More elsewhere (TP i, 1), here his thought is reminiscent of *Utopia*: "The establishment of this republic has one aim above all: that as far as public needs allow, all citizens should be granted as much time as possible from the service of the body to the freedom and cultivation of the mind" (More 1995, 134). Prima facie this conflicts with iii, 20, which makes "the end of the whole social order and of the state . . . to live securely and conveniently." For the TP, see the annotation at i, 6.

or teaches, and defends his view by reason alone, not with deception,
 20 anger, hatred, or an intention to introduce something into the republic
 on the authority of his own decision.

[15] For example, if someone shows that a law is contrary to sound
 reason, and therefore thinks it ought to be repealed, if at the same
 time he submits his opinion to the judgment of the supreme 'power (to
 whom alone it belongs to make and repeal laws), and in the meantime
 25 does nothing contrary to what that law prescribes, he truly deserves
 well of the republic, as one of its best citizens. But if he does this to
 accuse the magistrate of inequity, and make him hateful to the common
 people, or if he wants to nullify the law, seditiously, against the will of
 the magistrate, he's just a troublemaker and a rebel.

[16] We see, then, how everyone can say and teach what he thinks,
 30 without detriment to the right and authority of the supreme 'powers,
 i.e., without detriment to the Republic's peace: viz. if he leaves to them
 the decision about what's to be done, and does nothing contrary to
 their decree (even if he must often act contrary to what he judges—and
 openly says—is good). He can do this without harm to justice and piety.
 Indeed, he must do this if he wants to show himself to be just and pious.

[III/242] [17] As we've already shown,⁸ justice depends only on the decree of
 the supreme 'powers. So no one can be just unless he lives according
 to the decrees received from them. But by what we've shown in the
 preceding Chapter,⁹ the height of piety is what's done with regard to
 5 the peace and tranquillity of the Republic. That can't be preserved if
 each person is allowed to live according to the decision of his own mind.
 So it's also impious to do something from your own decision contrary
 to the decree of the supreme 'power to whom you're a subject. If this
 were permitted to everyone, it would necessarily lead to the downfall
 10 of the state. [18] But really, a subject can't do anything contrary to the
 decree and dictate of his own reason so long as he acts according to
 the supreme 'power's decrees. It was at the urging of reason itself that
 he decided, without reservation, to transfer to the supreme 'power his
 right of living according to his own judgment.

[19] We can also confirm this conclusion by considering practice.
 15 For in councils, both of the supreme 'powers and of lesser 'powers, it's
 rare for anything to be done by the common vote of all the members;
 nevertheless everything is done according to the common decision of
 all, both of those who voted for it and of those who voted against.

8. Akkerman suggests that the reference is to xvi, 2–6, and xix, 7–8. Perhaps we
 should add xvi, 42.

9. Cf. xix, 22–24 (A).

[20] But I return to my subject. From the foundations of the republic
 20 we've seen how each person can use his freedom of Judgment without
 detriment to the right of the supreme 'powers. From those same found-
 ations we can determine no less easily which opinions are seditious in
 a Republic: viz. those which, as soon as they are assumed, destroy the
 agreement by which each person surrendered his right to act according
 to his own decision.

[21] For example, if someone thinks that the supreme 'power isn't
 25 its own master, or that no one ought to keep his promises, or that each
 person ought to live according to his own decision, or something else
 of this kind, directly contrary to the agreement mentioned above, he
 is seditious. This isn't so much because of the judgment and opinion
 as because of the action such judgments involve. For by the very fact
 30 that he thinks such a thing, he cancels the assurance he's given, either
 tacitly or explicitly, to the supreme 'power.

Other opinions, which don't involve an act such as breaking the con-
 tract, taking vengeance, venting one's anger, etc., aren't seditious—except
 perhaps in a Republic somehow corrupted, e.g., where superstitious
 and ambitious men, who can't endure people who think in a manner
 worthy of a free man, achieve such a great reputation that ordinary
 people value their authority more than that of the supreme 'powers.

[III/243] [22] Still, we don't deny that there are some opinions, apparently
 concerned only with truth and falsity, which are nevertheless stated and
 spread abroad in an unjust spirit.¹⁰ We've already set limits to these in
 Chapter 15, in such a way that reason still remains free.

5 [23] Finally, if we attend also to the fact that the loyalty of each
 person to the Republic, like his loyalty toward God, can be known only
 from his works, from his loving-kindness toward his neighbor, we'll have
 no doubt at all that the best republic concedes to everyone the same
 freedom to philosophize as we've shown that faith does.

10 [24] I confess, of course, that sometimes such freedom has its disadvan-
 tages. But what was ever so wisely instituted that nothing inconvenient
 could come from it? Anyone who wants to limit everything by laws
 will provoke more vices than he'll correct.¹¹ What can't be prohibited
 must be granted, even if it often leads to harm. [25] How many evils
 15 come from extravagant living, envy, greed, drunkenness, and the like?
 Still, we endure these things, because the laws' command can't prohibit
 them, even though they're really vices. How much the more must we

10. Probably these opinions would include those which affirm the superiority of
 revelation to reason (cf. xv, 5ff.). These might be taken to imply that religious authority
 has precedence over secular, showing clerical resentment of political authority.

11. An allusion to Ovid, *Amores* III, iv, 11. The theme will recur in TP x, 5 (ALM).

grant freedom of judgment, which not only can't be suppressed, but is undoubtedly a virtue. [26] Moreover, as I'll show at once, it doesn't
 20 lead to any disadvantages which can't be avoided by the magistrates' authority—not to mention the fact that this freedom is especially necessary for advancing the arts and sciences. Only those who have a free and unprejudiced judgment can cultivate these disciplines successfully.
 25 [27] But suppose this freedom could be suppressed, and men so kept in check that they didn't dare to mutter anything¹² except what the supreme 'powers prescribe. This would surely never happen in such a way that they didn't even think anything except what the supreme 'powers wanted them to. So the necessary consequence would be that every day men would think one thing and say something else. The
 30 result? The good faith especially necessary in a Republic would be corrupted. Abominable flattery and treachery would be encouraged, as would deceptions and the corruption of all liberal studies.

[28] But it simply couldn't happen that everyone spoke within prescribed limits. On the contrary, the more the authorities try to take away this freedom of speech, the more stubbornly men will resist. Not the greedy, of course, or the flatterers, or the rest of the weak-minded,
 [III/244] whose supreme well-being consists in contemplating the money in their coffers¹³ and having bloated bellies. Resistance will come instead from those whom a good education, integrity of character, and virtue have made more free.

[29] For the most part men are so constituted that they endure
 5 nothing with greater impatience than that opinions they believe to be true should be considered criminal and that what moves them to piety toward God and men should be counted as wickedness in them. The result is that they dare to denounce the laws and do what they can against the magistrate; they don't think it shameful, but quite honorable, to initiate rebellions and attempt any crime for the sake of this cause.

10 [30] From what we've just established about the dispositions of human nature, it follows that laws made concerning opinions aren't concerned with the wicked, but with people who act like free men, that they aren't made to restrain the malicious, but to aggravate honest men, and that they can't be defended without great danger to the state.

[31] Moreover, such laws are completely useless. The people who
 15 believe that the opinions the laws condemn are sound will not be able

12. An allusion to Terence's *Andria* 505, where the words are those of a slave to a master who suspects him of deception. Other allusions to Terence in this passage occur at 243/33 (*praeefinito loqui*, from *Hecyra* 94) and 244/3 (*humanam naturam sic comparatam esse* from *Heautontimorumenos* 503) (ALM).

13. Here the allusion is to Horace's *Satires* 1.1, 67.

to obey them. But the people who think the condemned opinions false will accept the laws as privileges, and triumph in them so much that afterward the magistrate won't be able to repeal them even if he wants to.

[32] To these considerations we add what we deduced from the history of the Hebrews, in Chapter 18, under the second heading [§§13–14].

20 Finally, how many schisms in the Church have been produced by the magistrate's willingness to use laws to settle controversies among the learned? If men were not possessed by the hope of getting the laws and the magistrate on their side, of triumphing over their opponents through the general applause of the mob, and of acquiring honors,
25 they'd never contend so unfairly. Their minds would not be excited by such a great frenzy.

[33] It's not only reason which teaches these lessons; so does experience, with daily examples. Laws of this kind, which command what everyone is to believe, and prohibit people from speaking or writing something contrary to this or that opinion, have often been instituted
30 to make a concession to—or rather to surrender to—the anger of those who can't endure free minds and who can, by a certain grim authority, easily change the devotion of a seditious mob to madness, and rouse it against whomever they wish to.

[34] How much better it would be to restrain the anger and frenzy of the mob than to pass useless laws, which can be violated only by those who love the virtues and the arts, and to reduce the Republic to
[III/245] such narrowness that it can't endure men who act like free men? [35] What greater evil can be imagined for the Republic than that honest men should be exiled as wicked because they hold different opinions and don't know how to pretend to be what they're not? What, I ask, can be more ruinous than that men should be considered enemies
5 and condemned to death, not because of any wickedness or crime, but because they have a mind worthy of a free man? Or that the scaffold, the scourge of the evil, should become the noblest stage for displaying the utmost endurance and a model of virtue, to the conspicuous shame of the majesty?¹⁴ [36] For people who know themselves to be
10 honorable don't, like criminals, fear death or plead to be excused from punishment; they're not tormented by repentance for a shameful deed; on the contrary, they think it honorable, not a punishment, to die for

14. Spinoza uses the term *catasta* ("scaffold") only in this passage. I presume he means to refer to any place of execution, and has in mind such examples of heroic resistance as Don Lope de Vera y Alarcon (also known as Judah, the faithful), burned at the stake by the Inquisition in 1644, and celebrated in Menasseh ben Israel's *Hope of Israel* (a book Spinoza owned). For further detail, see the annotation to Spinoza's reply to Albert Burgh, Letter 76, IV/322.

a good cause, and glorious to die for freedom. What kind of precedent is established by the death of such men, whose cause those lacking in spirit and weak-minded know nothing about, whose cause the seditious
 15 hate,¹⁵ whose cause the honorable love? No one can take any example from this death, except to imitate it, or else to be a flatterer.

[37] So if good faith, not flattering lip service, is to be valued, if the supreme 'powers are to retain their sovereignty as fully as possible, and not be compelled to yield to the rebellious, freedom of judgment must
 20 be granted. Men must be so governed that they can openly hold different and contrary opinions, and still live in harmony. There can be no doubt that this way of governing is best, and has the least disadvantages, since it's the one most compatible with men's nature. [38] For we've shown that in a democratic state (which comes closest to the natural
 25 condition) everyone contracts to act according to the common decision, but not to judge and reason according to the common decision. Because not all men can equally think the same things, they agreed that the measure which had the most votes would have the force of a decree, but that meanwhile they'd retain the authority to repeal these decrees when they saw better ones. The less we grant men this freedom
 30 of judgment, the more we depart from the most natural condition, and the more violent the government.

[39] The next thing to establish is that this freedom has no disadvantages which can't be avoided just by the authority of the supreme 'power, and that the only easy way to restrain men from harming one another, even though they openly hold contrary opinions, is by this authority.

Examples are readily available; I don't need to look far to find them.

[III/246] [40] Consider the city of Amsterdam, which, from its great growth and the admiration of all nations, knows by experience the fruits of this liberty.¹⁶ In this most flourishing Republic, this most outstanding

15. Bennett was understandably puzzled by this. Why would rebels hate men willing to die for their beliefs? I think the seditious here are religious leaders who "can't endure free minds" (above §33) and therefore pressure the civil authorities to take repressive measures which, left to their own concerns, those authorities would not be disposed to take. Spinoza assumes the civil authorities will normally allow greater liberty than the religious leaders would. He would no doubt have cited the history of the Remonstrant controversy as evidence for this view. Cf. xix, 1, above, and xx, 41, below, along with the annotation given in those passages. See also Letter 30, IV/166/27–29, and the critique of the clergy in the Preface to the TTP, §§15–19. He regards the preachers as seditious because they deny the civil authorities rights which are essential to their sovereignty.

16. In his *Lettres philosophiques*, Voltaire will write similarly about London (6th Letter). In a letter to Mme. de Bernières, he has parallel remarks about Amsterdam and The Hague (7 October 1722). Meinsma thought that we should take Spinoza's praise of Amsterdam here as devilishly ironic (Meinsma 1983, 375). Recent commentators have generally disagreed, sometimes citing the testimony of contemporary observers to the exceptional freedom of the Dutch Republic. (Cf. Gebhardt V, 115; ALM; Gebhardt/Gawlick; Totaro;

city, all men, no matter what their nation or sect, live in the greatest
5 harmony. When they entrust their goods to someone, the only thing
they care to know is whether the person is rich or poor, and whether
he usually acts in good faith or not. They don't care at all what his
Religion or sect is, for that would do nothing to justify or discredit
their case before a judge. Provided they harm no one, give each person
10 his due, and live honestly, there is absolutely no sect so hated that its
followers are not protected by the public authority of the magistrates
and their forces.

[41] But before, when the religious controversy between the Remonstrants and the Counter-Remonstrants¹⁷ was being stirred up by the Politicians and the Estates of the provinces, in the end it degenerated into a schism, and many examples made it manifest that laws passed to settle
15 Religious controversies aggravate people more than they correct them, that some people take unlimited license from them, and moreover, that schisms don't come from a great zeal for truth (a source of gentleness and consideration for others), but from an overwhelming desire for control.¹⁸

[42] These examples show, more clearly than by the noon light, that
20 the real schismatics are those who condemn the writings of others and seditiously incite the unruly mob against the writers, not the writers themselves, who for the most part write only for the learned and call only reason to their aid. Again, the real troublemakers are those who want, in a free Republic, to take away freedom of judgment, even
25 though it can't be suppressed.

[43] With this we've shown:

- (1) that it's impossible to take away from people the freedom to say what they think;
- (2) that this freedom can be granted to everyone, without detriment to the right and authority of the supreme powers, and that everyone can
30 keep it, without detriment to that right, provided he takes no license

Bartuschat 2012.) No doubt Meinsma went too far in his criticism of Amsterdam when he claimed that in no other city in the republic was it so dangerous to express dissent. But Spinoza also goes too far when he claims that all men in Amsterdam live in the greatest harmony. §40 reflects Spinoza's hopes for Amsterdam, not a realistic assessment of the situation there in his day, as the persecution of Adriaan Koerbagh illustrates.

17. For the history of this controversy see Israel 1995, chs. 18–20.

18. In 1619 the Synod of Dordrecht (Dort) deprived about two hundred Remonstrant preachers of their livings and right to preach. Some were rehabilitated when they complied with a formula of submission. Others were permanently stripped of their pulpits but allowed to live as private citizens, provided they didn't preach or engage in theological disputes. The rest were banished, on pain of imprisonment if they sought to evade their expulsion. Maybe this doesn't, compared with the practices of the Inquisition, count as "unlimited license," but it does suggest a strong desire for control.

from that to introduce anything into the Republic as a right, or to do anything contrary to the accepted laws;

(3) that everyone can have this same freedom, and the peace of the Republic still be preserved, and that no disadvantages come from this which can't easily be limited;

(4) that everyone can have this freedom without detriment to piety; and

(5) that laws made about speculative matters are completely useless.

[III/247] [44] Finally, we've shown

(6) not only that this freedom *can* be granted without detriment to the peace of the Republic, and to the piety and right of the supreme 'powers, but that it *must* be granted, if we are to preserve all these things.

Where people try to take this freedom away from men, and bring
5 to judgment the opinions of those who disagree with them—but not their hearts, which alone can sin—they make examples of honest men, who seem rather to be martyrs. They aggravate the others more than they terrify them, and move them to compassion, if not to vengeance.

[45] Again, liberal studies and trust are corrupted, flatterers and traitors are encouraged, and the opponents [of liberal studies and trust]
10 exult, because a concession has been made to their anger, and because they've made those who have sovereignty followers of the doctrine whose interpreters they are thought to be. That's how it happens that they dare to usurp their authority and right, and don't blush to boast that they've been chosen immediately by God, and that their own decrees are divine, whereas those of the supreme 'powers are human, and
15 therefore should yield to divine decrees, that is, to their own decrees. No one can fail to see that all these things are completely contrary to the well-being of the Republic.

[46] So here, as above (in Ch. 18), we conclude that nothing is safer for the republic than that piety and Religion should include only the practice of Loving-kindness and Equity, and that the right of the
20 supreme 'powers concerning both sacred and secular matters should relate only to actions. For the rest, everyone should be granted the right to think what he wants and to say what he thinks.

[47] With this I've finished the matters I had decided to discuss in this Treatise. It remains only to note explicitly that I've written nothing here which I do not most willingly submit to the examination and
25 judgment of the supreme 'Powers of my Country. For if they judge that anything I've said is incompatible with the laws of the country

or contrary to the general welfare, I wish it unsaid. I know that I'm a man, and may have erred. But I've taken great pains not to err, and especially to write nothing which wouldn't be completely consistent with the laws of my country, with piety and with morals.

Letters, 42–84

JANUARY 1671–LATE 1676



EDITORIAL PREFACE

PEOPLE AND THEMES

In this largest section of the correspondence, Oldenburg returns, after an interval of ten years, to write or receive ten letters (61, 62, 68, 71, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, and 79), concerned primarily with the TTP and the reaction to it in England. We also meet a new correspondent, a young German nobleman, Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus, whose questions about the *Ethics*, which he has seen in manuscript form, give us the most significant discussion of that work in the correspondence. If we count the five letters to or from Schuller as being part of the Spinoza-Tschirnhaus correspondence,¹ Tschirnhaus was the author or recipient of fourteen letters (57, 58, 59, 60, 63, 64, 65, 66, 70, 72, 80, 81, 82, and 83).

Less frequent correspondents are often reacting, with considerable hostility, to the TTP.² Van Velthuysen writes a long, unfriendly critique of that work (Letter 42), to which Spinoza replies irritably (in Letter 43).³ But from Letter 69 it appears that in the end Spinoza and Van Velthuysen came to be on friendly terms.⁴ There's no evidence that the correspondence between Spinoza and Albert Burgh had such a happy ending. Burgh was a former admirer of Spinoza, who had converted to Roman Catholicism, and wrote him a most intemperate letter (Letter 67), apparently trying to get Spinoza to convert also. It's difficult to see how any rational person could

1. As we should. The five letters to and from Schuller are 58, 63, 64, 70, 72. In Letter 58, Spinoza addresses his letter to Schuller, but its philosophical substance is a response to a letter Tschirnhaus had sent him via Schuller, in Letter 57. He relies on Schuller to relay his response. Similarly in Letter 63, Schuller is the nominal author, but the philosophical substance of the letter comes from Tschirnhaus. All the letters to or from Schuller are like that. In the correspondence which has come down to us, Schuller is no more than a representative of Tschirnhaus. This seems also to have been the view of the OP editors, who grouped the letters to and from Schuller with the Spinoza-Tschirnhaus correspondence.

2. On 8 April 1670 the Utrecht Church Council of the Dutch Reformed Church had condemned the TTP as a "profane and blasphemous book," against which the burger-masters are urged to take "appropriate measures." See Freudenthal/Walther 2006, I, 287. Violent reactions in other towns quickly followed. See *Continuum Companion* 2011, 25.

3. This correspondence was conducted through Jacob Ostens, to whom Letters 42 and 43 are nominally addressed. The situation is similar to that between Spinoza and Tschirnhaus.

4. Van de Ven notes that Van Velthuysen publicly acknowledged this in the preface to his *Opera omnia* (1680), where he wrote that while Spinoza was alive, he had many conversations with him (Van de Ven *Facts*, ch. 9).

have thought such an insulting letter would be persuasive. Spinoza's reply (Letter 76) is sharp, but under the circumstances, a model of restraint.

There is a similar, though markedly more moderate, letter from Nicholas Steno to Spinoza (Letter 67bis). Steno too had been a friend of Spinoza's when he lived in the Netherlands, and Spinoza apparently had a high regard for his scientific work. He was also a friend of Burgh's in Florence, around the time of the exchange between Spinoza and Burgh.

The correspondence with Jelles in this period (Letters 44, 48A and B, 50 and 84) is of interest as illustrating the range of friends Spinoza had. On the one hand we have Adriaan Koerbagh, a radical freethinker, whose critique of Christian orthodoxy landed him in the prison where he died. On the other hand, we have Jelles, a very liberal Protestant no doubt, but still firmly committed to Christianity as he understood it. This edition gives a somewhat fuller picture of Jelles's views than has previously been available in English.

Arguments adduced by Fokke Akkerman (1980, 272–73) make it seem quite likely that the letter addressed to an unnamed friend, which has long appeared last in modern editions of Spinoza's correspondence, but which, in the OP and NS, was printed as a preface to the *Political Treatise*, was in fact addressed to Jarig Jelles. This edition proceeds on the assumption that Akkerman is right.

Some of the letters are primarily of biographical interest. Leibniz's letter to Spinoza (Letter 45) seems intended to strike up a conversation about the TTP. Apparently it did. Unfortunately, all we have of their correspondence, which was apparently more extensive than that, is Letter 45 and Spinoza's reply (Letter 46), which focuses on the optical questions Leibniz had raised. Similarly, the letter from Fabritius to Spinoza (Letter 47), offering him a chair at the University of Heidelberg, shows that some people in positions of power in Germany thought it would be a good thing if Spinoza held a chair of philosophy there. But why they thought this, and why Spinoza declined the offer, are a mystery. More about these matters below.

The most substantial remaining correspondence is the entertaining exchange about ghosts between Spinoza and Hugo Boxel (Letters 51–56). Perhaps not many readers of this edition will find Boxel's defense of the existence of ghosts persuasive, but the correspondence does illustrate that Spinoza could be quite patient with correspondents who differed from him very fundamentally.

Oldenburg

In the long time since they last corresponded, Oldenburg's attitude toward Spinoza has changed. No longer is he encouraging boldness. Now his

message to his friend is: caution—your work gives the initial impression of being harmful to religion—on reflection I can see that you are really trying to advance the cause of Christianity—but you need to make your purpose clearer.

For his part Spinoza makes no attempt to prove himself a Christian. But he is acutely sensitive to any suggestion that what he has written might undermine what Oldenburg refers to as “the practice of religious virtue” (Letter 62). He insists that his work doesn’t do that, that his determinism—which he formulates in Letter 75 as the doctrine that everything follows necessarily from the nature of God—is no more a threat to morality than the determinism he finds expressed in the Christian scriptures, such as Paul’s letter to the Romans, where we are all said to be in the power of God as clay is in the power of the potter.⁵

But, Oldenburg asks, won’t this imply that no one will be without excuse in the sight of God, contrary to other things Paul said in Romans?⁶ Spinoza replies that if a man is unable to restrain the desires which make him a danger to others, he may indeed be excusable for being what he is. It would make no more sense for God to be angry with him for that than it would for someone to be angry with a horse for being a horse (Letter 78, IV/327). But Spinoza thinks it’s a mistake to ascribe emotions like anger to God in any case. The essential point is that it doesn’t follow from the causation of the wicked man’s actions that we can’t treat him as we must, if we are to eliminate the danger he poses.⁷

Oldenburg’s concerns about the religious implications of the TTP lead to some useful probing of Spinoza’s views, and shed light on things which in that work Spinoza had left obscure—deliberately obscure, it sometimes seems. In the Editorial Preface to the TTP we considered the clarification which emerges about Spinoza’s statement that God’s wisdom assumed a human nature in Christ. Spinoza rejects any interpretation of this statement

5. Rom. 9:19–24, cited in Letter 75 (IV/312). There is useful commentary in the Anchor Romans. In other letters Spinoza uses other examples. For example, in Letter 73 (IV/307) he cites Paul’s speech to the Athenians (Acts 17:22–31)—with its statement that “in God we live and move and have our being”—which he takes as expressing an idea similar to his own doctrine that God is the immanent cause of all things. Fitzmyer (Anchor Acts, 610) comments that this line, apparently derived from Epimenides, “is not a pantheistic formula” in Paul, and that “it merely expresses the dependence of all human life on God and its proximity to him.” Arguably, the same is true of Spinoza’s use of this formula.

In Letter 58 (IV/268) Spinoza refers Tschirnhaus to II, vii, of CM (where he had cited Romans and Isaiah) and to Descartes’ *Principles* I, 39–41 (where Descartes had confessed his inability to reconcile God’s omnipotence with an indeterminist conception of freedom).

6. Rom. 1:20, 2:1.

7. This issue arose also in the correspondence with Tschirnhaus (Letter 57, IV/264), where it got a similar answer, crisply expressed: “evil men are no less to be feared, nor are they any less harmful, when they are necessarily evil” (Letter 58, IV/268).

which would commit him to the doctrine of the dual nature of Christ, as being both fully human and fully divine.⁸

Oldenburg was upset. The gospels state quite clearly that “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14). The Word was God (John 1:1). So if the gospels speak the truth, God must have become flesh. That is, he must have assumed a human nature. Oldenburg does not attempt to explain how this view is coherent. But he does want to know how Christianity can be true, if these statements in the gospels are not true. What becomes of our redemption, if the son of God, a wholly innocent human sacrifice, wholly innocent in spite of being human, but capable of excruciating suffering in spite of being God, did not atone for our sins by his suffering on the cross (Letter 74, IV/310)? The doctrine that Christ redeemed us from our sins, according to orthodox theology, required the doctrine of the incarnation.

Gradually Spinoza is drawn out. He says that he accepts Christ’s passion, death, and burial literally. If a non-believer had been present, he would have witnessed the same thing believers witnessed. But, he says, he can accept Christ’s resurrection only if it is understood allegorically. If any non-believers had been present at the post-crucifixion appearances, they might not have witnessed what believers witnessed. No doubt the evangelists believed that the resurrection was just as much an historical event as the crucifixion was. But they may have been deceived about this. And they may have been deceived, *without harm to the teaching of the gospel*.

What is important about the gospel teaching, Spinoza insists, is its moral message: we must love God and our neighbors, we must be just, and we must do whatever else follows from these fundamental commandments (cf. TTP xii, 37). It is not necessary to believe in the literal truth of what the gospels relate as history. It is not necessary, as he puts it in one place, “to know Christ according to the flesh” (Letter 73, IV/308). It is sufficient if we know him according to the spirit (that is, as I would understand it, if we have learned the moral lessons he taught, TTP v, 46, III/79), and believing that God, out of his mercy and grace, pardons men’s sins, are therefore more inspired to love God (TTP xiv, 28, III/178).

Tschirnhaus

In this section of the correspondence we also encounter a new friend, Ehrenfried Walther von Tschirnhaus (1651–1708), who later became an important contributor to mathematics and published an art of discovery—the *Medicina mentis* (*Medicine for the Mind*)—which showed Spinoza’s

8. This was church doctrine as early as the Council of Chalcedon in 451. Cf. Denzinger 1954, 60–61.

influence.⁹ Oldenburg was responsible for introducing Tschirnhaus to Leibniz, who saw great potential in the young man:

In sending Tschirnhaus to us, you have served me as a friend, for I take great pleasure in his company, and detect in this young man a remarkable intelligence, on which we may base great hopes.¹⁰

Tschirnhaus in turn later tried to act as an intermediary between Spinoza and Leibniz, seeking permission from Spinoza to let Leibniz see a manuscript copy of the *Ethics*, which Spinoza was then willing to circulate only among a limited circle of trusted friends (Letter 70).

Spinoza's correspondence with Tschirnhaus is dominated by questions about human freedom, philosophical method, the infinite modes, and the relation between the attributes. Of particular interest are Spinoza's defense of his position regarding human freedom (Letter 58), his explanation of the distinction he makes between truth and adequacy (Letter 60), his response to Tschirnhaus's query about our knowledge of attributes other than thought and extension (Letter 64), the examples he gives of infinite modes (also in Letter 64), and his assertion (in Letter 66) that each thing is expressed in infinite ways in the infinite intellect of God, with the infinitely many ideas by which it is expressed constituting infinitely many minds. This claim prompted Tschirnhaus's reaction that in this way the attribute of thought seems to be regarded as more extensive than the other attributes (Letter 70), a reaction which I believe is appropriate, however much it may seem to violate our preconceptions about the "parallelism" of the attributes.¹¹

Schuller

Schuller (1651–1679) was a compatriot of Tschirnhaus, who had come to the Netherlands in the 1670s to study medicine at the University of Leiden. Eventually he practiced medicine in Amsterdam. On his involvement with Spinoza, and in particular, in the publication of the *Opera posthuma*, see Steenbakkers 1994, 50–63.

Leibniz

The brief correspondence between Leibniz (1646–1716) and Spinoza, though disappointing philosophically, is of considerable biographical interest. Leibniz writes late in 1671, nearly two years after publication of the TTP, ostensibly to get Spinoza's opinion about matters in optics, but

9. For a good brief discussion of Tschirnhaus's life and works, see Schönfeld 1998. For a more detailed account of his work on method, see Van Peursen 1993. Tschirnhaus's *Medicina mentis* is now available online. See Tschirnhaus 1695.

10. Leibniz to Oldenburg, in Leibniz, Gerhardt, 143, as quoted in Laerke 2008, 363.

11. I discussed this in Curley 1969, ch. 4.

probably with the ulterior motive of drawing him into a discussion of the TTP. Spinoza replies about the optical issues, and reciprocates receipt of Leibniz's paper by offering to send him a copy of the TTP. No extant letters between them address any philosophical issues. What we would very much like to know is what Leibniz said to Spinoza about the TTP, when he subsequently wrote to him on that topic (as we know he did), and what Spinoza might have said in reply (*if* he replied, which we do not know).

Leibniz had read the TTP before he wrote to Spinoza about optics, and believed Spinoza was its author. We know this from his correspondence with other German philosophers. From that correspondence we also know that he was very concerned about that treatise, and hoped *someone* would refute it, though he himself did not feel up to the task.¹² His real motives for the inquiry about optics were almost certainly to elicit from Spinoza confirmation of his authorship of the TTP and to draw him into an exchange about the argument of that work.

He succeeded, in part at least. By offering to send Leibniz a copy of the TTP, Spinoza tacitly acknowledged authorship. From Letter 70 we know that at some point Leibniz wrote to Spinoza about that work. But we don't have his letter, and can only speculate about its probable contents.¹³ We also don't know what Spinoza replied, or even *if* he replied. We do know, from Letter 72, that though Spinoza was impressed by what he knew of Leibniz, he didn't quite trust him, denying Tschirnhaus permission to let Leibniz see the manuscript of the *Ethics*.¹⁴ For his part, Leibniz was evidently quite upset when the OP identified him by name as the author of the innocuous Letter 45.¹⁵ We may lack Leibniz's correspondence with Spinoza about the TTP because he did not want it to become known. I conjecture that in an attempt to elicit a response from Spinoza, he paid Spinoza compliments on the TTP which he did not wish to be generally known. Chances that the lost correspondence will someday turn up do not seem good.

Fabritius

Another indication of the reputation the TTP brought Spinoza is the invitation he received in 1673 to teach at the University of Heidelberg.

12. On this, see Curley 1990a and especially Laerke 2008.

13. In Curley 1990a I tried to make an educated guess about this.

14. See Letter 72. Spinoza's attempt to deny Leibniz access to the manuscript of the *Ethics* was apparently fruitless, since it seems that Tschirnhaus did share a copy with him. In the end Spinoza agreed to meet with Leibniz when he visited The Hague late in 1676, only a few months before Spinoza's death. By that time Leibniz had procured a copy of the *Ethics* and they discussed it. See Laerke 2008.

15. See Steenbakkers 1994, 62–63.

Here too, not everything in the correspondence is what it seems to be. In Letter 47 J. Ludwig Fabritius (1632–1697), a Calvinist professor of theology at Heidelberg, writes on behalf of Karl Ludwig, the Elector Palatine, to offer Spinoza a chair of philosophy. The Elector devoted his long reign (1648–1680) to rebuilding a principate devastated by the Thirty Years War, and was attempting to restore his university to its former eminence. Fabritius says he had not known Spinoza until this occasion, and that the Elector is making the offer because others (unnamed) have recommended Spinoza to him very highly.

One person who recommended Spinoza—the only one we know to have done this—claimed later that the Elector and he knew Spinoza only as the author of the exposition of Descartes. Urbain Chevreau, an expatriate French Catholic who advised the Elector on such matters, wrote in his memoirs that he had spoken

very advantageously of Spinoza, although I knew this Jewish Protestant [*sic*] only through the first and second parts of the Philosophy of M. Descartes. The Elector had this book, and after I had read him a few chapters of it, he decided to invite him to the University of Heidelberg, to teach philosophy there, *on the condition that he not dogmatize*.¹⁶

That condition—stated in somewhat different terms than we find in Fabritius’s letter¹⁷—would seem necessary only if Spinoza were known to be the author of the highly controversial TTP. There would be much less reason for it if he was known only as the author of the exposition of Descartes. Wolf conjectured, plausibly, that Chevreau’s account of these events may have been “intended to exonerate him from the charge of having recommended a heretic to an important post.”¹⁸

It’s evident from the Leibniz correspondence that there was considerable discussion of the TTP in Germany and that Spinoza’s authorship of it was well-known in academic circles (Curley 1990a). It’s hard to believe that Karl Ludwig and his advisors knew nothing of Spinoza’s having written this work. Wolf thought the Elector may have found the TTP’s “spirit of undogmatic toleration” congenial to his project of bringing about a union of the reformed churches. Walther has suggested that he may have made the offer to Spinoza, *because* he was the author of the TTP, not *in spite of* that fact (Gebhardt/Walther 1986, 357–58).

16. Gebhardt/Walther 1998, 248–49, italics in the original.

17. In the letter the condition is that Spinoza would have “the utmost liberty to philosophize,” with the understanding that he would “not abuse this freedom to disturb the publicly established religion.”

18. Wolf 1966, 441–42.

However that may be, it seems overwhelmingly likely that Fabritius made Spinoza an offer which he hoped and believed Spinoza would refuse. He had read the TTP in 1671. So it is not true that he had not known Spinoza previously. At that time he is reported to have said: “I shudder when I see that such unbridled license is allowed to state publicly whatever comes to (one’s) mind, and to blaspheme so openly against the Christian religion itself and Holy Scripture.”¹⁹ His statement to Spinoza that the Elector believed he would not abuse his freedom to philosophize to the disadvantage of the established religion looks as though it’s intended to discourage Spinoza from accepting the offer. Apparently it did.²⁰

Still, the concluding paragraph of Letter 48 is quite surprising. Up to that point Spinoza had seemingly rejected the offer of the chair quite unequivocally, not just because of his concerns about freedom of expression, but also because he was afraid that the obligation to teach would interfere with his research. But then he asks for more time to deliberate! Was he just being polite? Or would he have been more receptive to an offer which gave him a less ambiguous assurance of his freedom to philosophize? Might he have accepted a renewed offer if it had been suitably revised? We can only wonder.

Boxel

After these matters of academic politics are six letters (Letters 51–56) which passed between Spinoza and Hugo Boxel, fondly remembered for their bizarre dialogue about ghosts. Boxel was a legal scholar from Gorinchem, and a political figure of some importance in his native town.²¹ He is sure that ghosts exist and cites a host of authorities to support this proposition. But he wants to know Spinoza’s opinion. Spinoza is skeptical. Boxel has had a bad press, and his position is not easy to take seriously these days. But though he may accept a lot of stories we now reject, he does try to distinguish between credible and incredible sources, emphasizing the ones he thinks are credible. Those inclined to think Boxel just a fool should read Thomas 1971, a classic attempt to explain how such phenomena as astrology, witchcraft, prophecies, ghosts, and fairies, “now all rightly disdained by intelligent persons,” could be “taken seriously by equally intelligent persons” in the early modern period. (See especially ch. 19 in Thomas.)

We have a replay here of the exchange between Spinoza and Blyenbergh in Volume I, though Boxel seems more sophisticated and intelligent

19. Gebhardt/Walther 1998, 252.

20. See Nadler 1999, 311–14.

21. Boxel was the secretary of Gorinchem from 1655 to 1659, and pensionary of that town from then until he was dismissed from that post in 1672. The *Continuum Companion* conjectures that his dates were 1607/12? to 1680? (2011, 27).

than Blyenbergh. One significant feature of the correspondence between them is Spinoza's rejection, toward the end of Letter 56, of the authority of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates. He attaches great weight, though, to the opinions of the atomists: Epicurus, Democritus, and Lucretius.

Van Velthuysen

AHW comment (481) that Lambertus van Velthuysen (1622–1685) challenges Spinoza as fiercely as he does precisely because his own position is as close to Spinoza's as it is. As a defender of the new philosophy (both of Descartes and of Hobbes),²² who nevertheless would not stray as far from orthodoxy as Hobbes did, Van Velthuysen no doubt felt the need to distance himself from Spinoza. But he certainly agreed with one of the TTP's most Hobbesian conclusions: though individuals have the right to *think* what they will, the state has the right to *determine what the official state church can teach by public authority*.

To twenty-first-century readers, this will no doubt seem an illiberal position. But that may betray a lack of historical perspective. In the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, which had given official status to the Reformed Church during the war for independence from Spain, putting the decision about what that church would teach in the hands of the regents, who were generally more interested in political and economic considerations than in taking a hard line on the fine points of theology,²³ surely led to more freedom of thought and expression than would have been allowed under the only viable alternative, which would have been for a synod of Calvinist ministers to decide what might be taught in the state church.²⁴

Though a friend of the new philosophy, who agrees that it's important to cast off prejudices which cannot be supported by reason, Van Velthuysen is not nearly as radical as Spinoza. He opposes Spinoza's necessitarianism, complains that (as he supposes) Spinoza identifies God with the universe,²⁵ is distressed by Spinoza's rejection of God as a lawgiver, who will dispense appropriate rewards and punishments in the afterlife, and is concerned that Spinoza represents the prophets as using arguments based on false assumptions about God, which they sometimes shared, and sometimes used only because seeming to share their audience's prejudices would promote good conduct. It is pleasant to learn from Letter 69 that, in spite of their

22. It is now easier to understand Van Velthuysen's position from the recent edition of his defense of Hobbes (Van Velthuysen 2013). See particularly Secretan's introduction to that text.

23. On this, see Price 1994.

24. See TTP xix, and the annotation there regarding the Remonstrant controversy.

25. Spinoza protests against this common interpretation in Letter 43, IV/223b/22–25.

differences, Van Velthuysen and Spinoza eventually established amicable relations.

Burgh

The story of Spinoza and Albert Burgh has a different arc. Burgh (1651–?) was the son of Conrad Burgh, Treasurer General of the Dutch Republic. Reportedly, he studied Latin with Van den Enden, and philosophy at the University of Leiden in the late 1660s. While in Leiden he is supposed to have become a friend and admirer of Spinoza's. But then, on a visit to Italy in 1673, he converted to Catholicism.²⁶ In Letter 67 he tries to persuade Spinoza to follow the same path. Spinoza's reply to Burgh (Letter 76) is quite sharp, and quite revealing about his attitude toward the principal organized religions of his day: he thinks they are all false, to one degree or another, but that they all contain ethical teachings which deserve to be encouraged. There is no evidence that they ever reconciled. I've analyzed this exchange in Curley 2010.

Steno

Modern editions of the correspondence generally contain the letter (Letter 67bis) Nicholas Steno (1638–1687) addressed to Spinoza—not by name, but as “The Reformer of the New Philosophy”—and published in Florence in 1675. Steno was a Danish scientist, distinguished both in anatomy and in geology. Between 1660 and 1663 he studied physiology at the University of Leiden, where he and Spinoza became acquainted, and where it appears that Spinoza attended some of the dissections for which Steno became famous.²⁷ When he became a Catholic in 1667, he gave up science for religion, took holy orders (1675), and was soon made a bishop (1677). There is a remark by Leibniz, widely quoted, which suggests that he did not approve of Steno's decision: “From being a great physicist he became a mediocre theologian.”²⁸

There seems to be no reason to think that Steno ever sent his letter to Spinoza, and we have no record of any reply from Spinoza. This may be the reason why it was not included in the OP or NS. Kardel reports that Steno had written his letter and showed it to Burgh before Burgh wrote to Spinoza, and that he decided to publish it only after seeing Spinoza's reply to Burgh (Kardel 2013, 334–37).

26. For further information, see Nadler 1999, 336–40, and Meinsma 1983, *passim*, but especially 451–58.

27. For more on Steno, see Kardel 1994 and 2013. Cutler 2003 provides a good popular account of Steno's scientific work.

28. Cutler 2013, 161. Mogens Laerke tells me (in personal correspondence) that this probably does not fairly represent Leibniz's view of Steno.

Leen Spruit and Pina Totaro (Spruit/Totaro, 6–26) have recently shown that in the summer of 1677 Steno acquired a manuscript copy of the *Ethics*—apparently from Tschirnhaus—and that after reading it, he passed it on to the Holy Office in Rome, urging that Spinoza’s works be put on the Index. After investigating, the Church first banned the TTP (November 1678), and then the *Ethics*, TP, and Letters (February 1679). However, the Church did preserve Steno’s manuscript of the *Ethics* in the Vatican Library, where Spruit and Totaro recently located it. As a result we have a pleasing irony: we owe our only manuscript copy of Spinoza’s *Ethics* to an attempt to suppress it.

Jelles

Finally, in this section of the correspondence there are at least three letters Spinoza sent to his friend Jarig Jelles—Letters 44, 48B, and 50—and one Jelles sent to Spinoza (48A). If Akkerman is right (1980, 272–73), as I believe he is, Letter 84 should also be counted among the letters Spinoza wrote to Jelles. Jelles was among the group who arranged for the publication of the *Opera posthuma*. He also wrote, in Dutch, a preface to those works which was published in *De nagelate schriften* and which Lodewijk Meyer translated into Latin for the *Opera posthuma*.

Jelles was a Collegiant, and a close friend of Spinoza, who in 1673 wrote a *Profession of Faith* which he sent Spinoza for comment, receiving a very brief, but (so far as we can tell) generally supportive response. We don’t have Jelles’s original letter of 1673, or much of Spinoza’s reply. But we do have a version of his *Profession* which Rieuwertsz published in 1684, after Jelles’s death the preceding year. Because of the length of the 1684 version (174 pp.), editors of Spinoza’s correspondence have never included it in its entirety. But since AHW’s edition of the correspondence (1977), it has become customary to include an abstract of it, now generally known as Letter 48A. I have made a fuller abstract of it than has been available previously.

Jelles has a pretty traditional conception of God as a personal creator, who always acts for the best. (Not very Spinozistic.) He can accept the Johannine idea that Jesus was co-eternal with God, and *was* God, not holding merely that he had a sanctifying and life-giving spirit in him. (Not very Spinozistic.) He believes that the whole Christian religion is epitomized in two commandments: love God and love your neighbor as yourself. (*Very* Spinozistic.) He believes that men don’t love God or their neighbors as they should partly because they don’t know God, but partly also because they have irrational desires they can’t control. (*Very* Spinozistic.) By the time he writes the final version of his *Profession* he

believes that men are born without the love of God which would enable them to overcome their anti-social passions, but not that they are born naturally evil. It appears from Letter 48B that in the 1673 version of his *Profession*, Jelles held a more traditional position on original sin, but that Spinoza persuaded him to abandon it, in favor of a position to which Spinoza would have had no objection. Finally, Jelles believes that we can be redeemed from sin through Jesus, if his teachings come to guide our lives. (Again, *very* Spinozistic.)

Given the extent of Spinoza's probable agreement with the version of the *Profession* published in 1684, it's not surprising that he made little objection to the version of 1673. But in evaluating his response, we must keep in mind that we don't know in any detail how much the letter Jelles sent him in 1673 may have differed from the published letter which has come down to us. At the end of the 1684 version Jelles asked two questions: (i) is there anything in my *Profession* which you think is false or contrary to Holy Scripture? and (ii) is someone who builds on this foundation, and tries to live according to it, a Christian? Because we don't know the 1673 version of the *Profession*—and in particular, don't know precisely how Jelles formulated the question(s) he posed to Spinoza—it's impossible to know just what to make of the letter whose contents are reported in the fragments now generally known as Letter 48B. But the material and the questions it poses are extremely interesting.

Graevius

The letter from Spinoza to Graevius (Letter 49), despite its brevity and lack of philosophical content, is of some biographical interest: it shows that Spinoza had some degree of friendly relations with a Utrecht professor who in his correspondence with Leibniz denounced the TTP as “most pernicious” and who had spread the word that Spinoza, identified as a Jew excommunicated from the synagogue because of his wicked opinions, was thought to be its author.²⁹ In spite of this hostility, Graevius does seem to have played a role in arranging for Spinoza's mysterious visit to the French army headquarters in Utrecht in July 1673. On this see Van de Ven 2015.

PROVENANCE OF THE LETTERS

Spinoza and Oldenburg

For the correspondence between Spinoza and Oldenburg in this section our primary source is the OP (supplemented by the NS, which prints Dutch

29. On these matters, see Curley 1990a.

translations of every letter whose Latin original is in the OP). There is one letter (79) which the OP editors omitted, presumably because it was their policy not to include letters Spinoza did not reply to. We know this letter because it was preserved in the Orphanage of the Mennonite Collegiants.

Letter 61, from Oldenburg to Spinoza, is Letter 17 in the OP. Since their last correspondence, each had apparently made unsuccessful attempts at communication. Spinoza had sent Oldenburg a copy of the TTP, which apparently never reached him. Oldenburg had written to thank him for this, in a letter which also seems not to have reached its destination. How Oldenburg would have known to thank Spinoza for a book he supposedly never received is a puzzle for which I have no solution.

In any event, Oldenburg did somehow procure a copy of the TTP, read it, and sent Spinoza his opinion of it, in the lost thank-you letter mentioned above, which we know about from the mention of it in Letter 61. That letter was apparently critical of Spinoza's work as seemingly harmful to religion. By the time he writes Letter 62 (18 in the OP), he has apparently moderated his opinion of the TTP. But he has also heard, in another letter now lost, of Spinoza's plan to publish the *Ethics*, and his opinion of Spinoza has apparently not changed enough for him not to be worried about what might be in that work. Letter 68 (19 in the OP) replies to Letter 62, telling Oldenburg about his self-censorship of the *Ethics*, and asking why the TTP might have made him worry about the *Ethics*.

Letter 71 (20 in the OP) begins a dialogue about Christianity which will continue to the end of their correspondence. In Letters 73–75, 77, and 78 (21–25 in the OP) it gradually becomes clear that Oldenburg has been upset by the TTP without realizing how radical it really is. This is partly because Spinoza is apt to appropriate doctrines from the Jewish and Christian traditions which bear a superficial similarity to his own views, and partly because the TTP deliberately conceals some of his disagreements with orthodox Christian doctrine, as we learn from Letters 75 and 78.

For Letters 73, 75, and 78, we have, in addition to the OP and NS versions, copies of Spinoza's letters to Oldenburg, which Leibniz made when he visited London. Textual variations which we owe to Leibniz's copies are indicated by the abbreviation LC. Gebhardt prints these in the lower half of the page, but they do not have much importance for the establishment of the text. Leibniz's copies don't often differ from the OP text, and in only one case (IV/326/25–26) do they seem to have a better reading. I treat the OP version as the default text, with a note indicating those places where it differs significantly from Leibniz's copy. For discussion of the textual issues, see Akkerman 1980, 45–47.

Spinoza and Tschirnhaus

Most of the letters between Spinoza and Tschirnhaus are known only from the OP (and NS). Letter 57 is Letter 61 in the OP; 58 is 62 in the OP, and so on (59 = OP 63, 60 = OP 64, 63 = OP 65, 64 = OP 66, 65 = OP 67, 66 = OP 68, 80 = OP 69, 81 = OP 70, 82 = OP 71, and 83 = OP 72). The exceptions are Letters 63, 70, and 72, which are known also from autographs. The originals of Letters 63, 70, and 72 are in the possession of the Orphanage of the Mennonite Collegiants, and were first published in 1860 by Van Vloten.

Spinoza and Van Velthuysen

Letter 42 (48 in the OP) is the longest of the letters in Volume II. To make navigation in the text easier I've introduced in brackets the paragraph numbers of the OP. Because some of Van Velthuysen's paragraphs are quite long, I break them up into smaller, unnumbered units. The bracketed OP paragraph numbers show what the original paragraphing was. The NS version includes a note where Spinoza comments (perhaps unfairly) on Van Velthuysen's letter. See IV/210/32, and the note thereto. Van Velthuysen's position on the interpretation of Scripture is roughly that of Maimonides and Meyer: reason is the interpreter of Scripture.

Letter 43 (49 in the OP) suggests that Spinoza may have thought Van Velthuysen intended Letter 42 for publication, a hypothesis encouraged by its length.³⁰ It appears from Letter 69 that subsequently Spinoza contemplated the possibility of publishing Letter 42 (or some revised version of it) together with his own reply.

For Letter 43 I translate the autograph version, which Gebhardt prints in the bottom half of the page. Gebhardt preferred the OP text because he thought Spinoza himself had revised his letter for publication in the OP. Following Akkerman (1980, 38–40), I reject that theory. Apart from the interesting passage translated in n. 3 (which Gebhardt gives in his *Textgestaltung*, p. 412), the differences between the two versions are slight. I assume Akkerman's emendation of Gebhardt's *corrigito* to *conijcito* on Gebhardt 421.

Letter 69 did not appear in the OP or NS. The original was first published in 1844, in a lithographic facsimile, by Prof. H. W. Tydeman, in the *Utrechtse Volks-Almanak*. It was subsequently lost.

30. Van de Ven reports that Van Velthuysen's critique was "actively disseminated" among Spinoza's critics and admirers. See Van de Ven *Facts*, ch. 9.

Spinoza and Jelles

Letter 44 is Letter 47 in the OP and NS, our only sources for these letters. I take the NS version as the copy-text, and note variations in the OP version. I treat Letter 50 (which is also Letter 50 in the OP and NS) similarly. For a discussion of the issues these letters raise, see the Editorial Preface to Letters 29–41.

Letters 48A and 48B are very special cases. As mentioned previously, in the spring of 1673 Jelles wrote to Spinoza summing up the views he felt committed to as a Christian, and inviting Spinoza's comment. This letter was not included in the OP or NS. No letter *from* Jelles *to* Spinoza was included, even though Jelles was one of the editors of the posthumous works. After Jelles's death his friend Jan Rieuwertsz published a version of it in 1684. Wolf was familiar with the 1684 version when he published his translation of the correspondence in 1928. By the 1950s and 1960s, however, Mme. Thijssen-Schoute was reporting that the only known copy was missing. When AHW published the first edition of their translations of the correspondence in 1977, they were able to report that it had been found (AHW, 16), and they published the introduction and conclusion of the letter, omitting its central part, and dubbing these extracts Letter 48A. Subsequent editions of the correspondence (Dominguez, Walther, Shirley) have followed their example.

In 2004 Leen Spruit published a modern edition of the Dutch text of the letter of 1684, with an Italian translation on facing pages (Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004). That is the text I have relied on for my translation of the excerpts from this letter included here. But unlike previous editors, I have undertaken to make an abridgment of the central portion of Jelles's letter, on the theory that knowing more of what Jelles said will help us to better appreciate Spinoza's response.

Apparently no one now living has seen the 1673 version of the letter. I know of no evidence that it was nearly as long as that of 1684, and there is some reason to think it may have been much shorter. See the annotation to Letter 48B. What we now call Letter 48B is not, in fact, a letter, but a collection of reports on Spinoza's reaction to (the 1673 version of) Letter 48A, which all purport to quote from a letter (now lost) which Spinoza wrote to Jelles in April 1673. The first comes from a postscript Jan Rieuwertsz the elder added to Jelles's letter when he published it, and presumably quotes Spinoza reliably (Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, 232). The second comes from Bayle's *Dictionary* article on Spinoza: §1 from the main body of the article (Bayle 2001, 528), and §2 from Remark Y (Bayle 2001, 595–96). I would conjecture that insofar as Bayle reports Spinoza's opinion of Jelles's letter, he is depending on Rieuwertsz's postscript, and has not

actually seen the letter (which he seems to think, falsely, was written in Latin). But his report is interesting in spite of this. The third comes from the travel journal of a Dr. Hallman, who interviewed Jan Rieuwertsz the younger, the son of Spinoza's (and Jelles's) publisher, when he visited the Netherlands in 1704.³¹ It is not easy to reconcile Hallman's report with the first two reports.

On the theory I accept, that Jarig Jelles is the unnamed friend to whom Spinoza wrote Letter 84, the original of that letter would surely have been written in Dutch. Akkerman has suggested that Lodewijk Meyer is likely to have translated the original into the Latin version of the OP, and that seems a reasonable hypothesis. Akkerman does not assume that the Dutch of the NS necessarily reproduces an unaltered version of the original letter. He suggests that Meyer or Jelles might have made some revisions in the original for the publication in the NS. (We know from Letter 19 that as late as 1665 Spinoza did not feel entirely comfortable writing in Dutch.) But in the absence of a verifiable original, it seems that the NS version is as close to the original as we are likely to get. So that is what I have translated.

Spinoza and Boxel

The correspondence between Spinoza and Boxel (Letters 51–56, which are Letters 55–60 in the OP and NS) was conducted in Dutch, and for the most part what holds of the other letters written in Dutch for which we have no original, holds for these letters. See the discussion in the Editorial Preface to Letters 29–41, p. 8.

The exception is Letter 53 (57 in the NS). For a long time we had a copy of the original of this letter, apparently made by the seventeenth-century editors of Spinoza's works. This copy was destroyed in World War II, but not before Freudenthal and Gebhardt had made copies from it (AHW, 529–30). Gebhardt reproduces that copy in the bottom half of the page, below the Latin version of the OP. AHW reproduce this copy, but emend (by appeal to the NS) some passages where it had been damaged. I translate AHW's text, which is very similar to that of the NS. The marginal page numbers are from Gebhardt's version of the copy, which he prints in the lower half of the page. The only other letter in the Boxel correspondence for which Gebhardt gives the NS version is Letter 52. He takes the absence in that letter of Latin terms in the margins to indicate that (contrary to what he thinks is Spinoza's normal practice) Spinoza did not translate the Latin version back into Dutch, and that the NS version thus gives us what he originally wrote. Akkerman 1980 argued persuasively

31. See Freudenthal 1899, 231–32; Gebhardt/Walther 1998, 140.

against Gebhardt's theory that Spinoza had generally translated his Dutch letters into Latin for the OP, and then translated them (from the improved Latin versions) back into Dutch for the NS. He allows that the NS versions have probably been reworked somewhat, but by the editors, not Spinoza. I proceed on the assumption that the NS versions are probably closer to the original than the Latin of the OP, and should be the default text for translation, with potentially interesting variations in the OP noted. This has the inconvenience in the correspondence with Boxel that when Gebhardt does not give us the NS text—as he does not for Letters 51 and 54–56—my marginal page and line numbers are those of the Latin text. Before long, I expect, we will probably have a new critical edition of the correspondence which will give the NS versions of these letters. In the meantime readers worried about unreported differences can procure a copy of the NS through UMI Books on Demand

Spinoza, Burgh, and Steno

Letter 67 is Letter 73 in the OP, the generally preferred source for translation, since the letter was originally written in Latin. In one passage comparison with the NS translation suggests an improvement in the text: at IV/285/14. For Letter 67bis the ultimate source is the original publication in Florence in 1675, which was reprinted in a facsimile edition in volume I of the *Chronicon Spinozanum*.

Letter 76 (Spinoza's reply to Burgh) is Letter 74 in the OP. In addition to the NS translation, we have a copy made by Leibniz, sent to his patron, the Catholic Duke of Hanover, Johan Friedrich, in 1677, with an interesting cover letter, commenting on Spinoza's reply to Burgh (Leibniz, Akademie edition, II, i, 301–3). There is a detailed and valuable study of this letter by Piet Steenbakkers (Steenbakkers 2005), which argues, among other things, that the Leibniz copy and the NS version are not independent of one another. This diminishes the possible significance of passages where they agree against the OP text. My default text is the OP. The passages where the Leibniz copy and the NS show more text than the OP seem to be signs of carelessness on the part of the OP compositor.

LETTER 42 (OP)

LAMBERT DE VELTHUYSEN, M.D.

TO THE VERY LEARNED AND DISTINGUISHED JACOB OSTENS

Most Learned Sir,

[1] Now that I finally have some free time, I've immediately set my mind to satisfying your desires and requests. You ask me to tell you my opinion, give you my judgment, of the book titled *Theological-Political*
 5 *Discourse*. I've decided to do that now, as well as the time available and my ability permit. However, I won't go into detail, but will just try to give a brief account of the author's meaning and intention concerning religion.

[2] What his nation is, or what plan of life he follows, I don't know and don't care to know. The argument of his book shows clearly enough
 10 that he's not stupid, and that his examination and consideration of the religious controversies troubling Christians in Europe is neither careless nor superficial. The author has persuaded himself that if he sets aside and casts off prejudices, he'll fare better in examining the opinions which make men divide into factions and form parties. So he's worked
 15 quite diligently to free his mind from all superstition. To make himself immune from that, he's inclined too much in the opposite direction. To avoid being faulted for superstition, he seems to me to have cast off all religion. At any rate, he doesn't rise above the religion of the Deists, of whom we have quite enough everywhere—such are the wicked ways
 20 of our age—especially in France.

Mersenne once published a Treatise against the Deists which I recall having read.¹ But I think hardly any of the Deists has written on behalf of that wicked cause as maliciously, as skillfully and as cunningly as the author of this dissertation has. Furthermore, unless I miss my guess,
 25 this man does not stay within the bounds of the Deists and leaves men an even narrower scope for worship.

1. Mersenne 1624. The deists Mersenne attacks in this treatise hold that there is a God and an afterlife, but add that if God is good, he will not want his creatures to suffer eternal torment, and that if he is just, he will not punish them for sins he foreknew they would commit. Since the Christian scriptures appear to be committed to eternal punishment for sins they present God as foreknowing, this led the deists to deny that these scriptures embody a divine revelation and to hold that those who obeyed the moral law common to the monotheistic religions would be saved, no matter what version of monotheism they accepted. Mersenne interpreted this view as a rationalization of the deists' desire to live a libertine life. For further discussion, see Curley 2000. Van Velthuysen seems to accept Mersenne's understanding of deism, and to recognize that Spinoza's position is more radical than deism.

[IV/208] [3] He recognizes God and declares that he is the maker and founder of the Universe. But he maintains that the form, appearance and order of the world are completely necessary, as necessary as the nature of God and the eternal truths, which he maintains have been established outside God's will. So he also says plainly that everything happens by
5 unconquerable necessity and inevitable fate.

He maintains that, for those who consider things correctly, there's no place for [divine] precepts and commands, but that human ignorance has brought in terms of this kind, just as the common people's lack of sophistication has given rise to ways of speaking which attribute affects
10 to God. So God accommodates himself to man's power of understanding in the same way when he presents those eternal truths (and the other things which must happen necessarily) as commands to men.

He also teaches that the things the laws command (things thought to be subject to men's will)² occur as necessarily as the fact that a triangle
15 has the nature it does, and therefore, that the things contained in the precepts don't depend on men's will, and that by pursuing or fleeing from them men achieve no good and avoid no evil, any more than God's will is redirected by prayers, or than his eternal and absolute decrees are changed.

So precepts and decrees exist for the same reason, and agree in this:
20 men's lack of sophistication and ignorance have moved God to provide that there should be some use for them among those who cannot form more perfect thoughts about God, and who require wretched aids of this kind to excite in them a zeal for virtue and a hatred of vices. That's why the author makes no mention in his writing of any use of prayers,
25 any more than he does of life and death, or of any reward or punishment men will receive from the judge of the universe.

[4] He does this consistently with his principles: what room can there be for a last judgment, or what expectation of reward or punishment,
30 when everything is ascribed to fate and it's maintained that all things emanate from God by an inevitable necessity—or rather, when one maintains that this whole universe is God? For I fear that our author is not very far from that opinion. At least there's not much difference between maintaining that everything emanates necessarily from God's nature and maintaining that the Universe itself is God.³

2. The parenthetical comment alludes to a common argument for free will, according to which God's giving men commands implies that they have the power to obey those commands or disobey them. Cf. Erasmus 1524, 54–61.

3. A great many interpreters have agreed with Van Velthuysen in reading Spinoza's metaphysics as identifying God with the universe. Cf. "Spinoza," Remark A (Bayle 2001, 531). But *prima facie* Letter 43, IV/223b/22–25, rejects (and resents) that interpretation.

[IV/209] [5] Nevertheless, he places man's supreme pleasure in the cultivation of virtue, which he says is its own reward and a stage for the most splendid things. He therefore holds that the man who understands things rightly ought to attend to virtue, not because of God's precepts
 5 and law, or because he hopes for a reward or fears punishment, but because he is attracted by the beauty of virtue and the spiritual delight man finds in its practice.

[6] He maintains, then, that God only appears, through the Prophets and revelation, to exhort men to virtue by the hope of rewards and fear of punishments (two things always connected with laws). The mind
 10 of common men is so made—so badly fashioned—that it can only be driven to practice virtue by arguments borrowed from the nature of laws, and from the fear of punishment and hope of reward. But men who judge the matter truly, he thinks, understand that there is no truth or force in arguments of this kind.

15 [7] It follows from this axiom that the Prophets and the holy Teachers—and thus God himself, since he spoke to men through their mouths—used arguments which in themselves were false, if we assess their nature. But the Author doesn't think this matters. When the occasion arises, he openly and indiscriminately proclaims and teaches
 20 that Sacred Scripture has not been provided to teach the truth, and the natures of the things it mentions, but that it turns them to its purpose, of forming men for virtue. He denies that the Prophets were so knowledgeable about things that they were completely immune from the errors of the Common People in constructing arguments and
 25 thinking up the arguments they used to rouse men to virtue (although they knew very well the nature of the moral virtues and vices).

[8] So the Author also teaches that the Prophets weren't free from errors of judgment even when they were warning the people they were sent to about their duty. This still doesn't diminish their holiness and
 30 credibility. Though they didn't use true discourse and arguments, but used language accommodated to the preconceived opinions of their audience, with which they roused men to virtues about which no one has ever been undecided and about which there is no controversy, the purpose of a Prophet's mission was to promote the cultivation of virtue among men, not to teach any truth.

[IV/210] For that reason he thinks a Prophet's error and ignorance weren't harmful to the listeners he was rousing to virtue. He thinks it doesn't matter what arguments incite us to virtue, provided they don't subvert
 5 the moral virtue the Prophet advanced them to arouse. He thinks the mind's perception of the truth of other things is not important for piety, when the holiness of the practice is not really contained in that truth.

He also thinks that knowledge of the truth, and even of the mysteries, is the more or less necessary, in proportion as it contributes more or less to piety.

10 [9] I think the author has in mind that axiom of the Theologians, who distinguish between the discourse of a Prophet when he is propounding a doctrine and when he is simply relating something. If I'm not mistaken, all Theologians accept that distinction. But he is quite wrong to think that his teaching agrees with it.

[10] For that reason he supposes that all those who deny that reason
 15 and Philosophy are interpreters of Scripture will agree with his opinion. Since it is manifest to everyone that countless things are said about God in Scripture which are not applicable to God, but are accommodated to men's understanding, so that men may be moved by them, and have a zeal for virtue roused in them, he thinks it must be maintained either
 20 that the Holy Teacher wanted to educate men to virtue by those arguments, not by true ones, or that a freedom has been granted to anyone reading holy Scripture to judge of the meaning and purpose of the holy Teacher from the principles of his own reason. This latter opinion the author utterly condemns, and rejects along with those who teach, with the paradoxical Theologian, that reason is the interpreter of Scripture.⁴
 25 For he thinks that Scripture must be interpreted according to its literal meaning, and that men should not be granted a freedom to interpret, according to their own will and sense of reason, how the prophets' words must be understood, so that they may weigh, according to their own reasons and the knowledge they have acquired for themselves about things, when the Prophets are speaking literally and when figuratively.
 30 There'll be an opportunity to speak about these things later.

[11] But I digress. Sticking to his principles concerning the fatal
 [IV/211] necessity of all things the Author denies⁵ that any miracles occur contrary

4. The "paradoxical theologian" is Spinoza's friend Lodewijk Meyer, who argued in Meyer 1666 that reason is the interpreter of Scripture. On Meyer and his relation to Spinoza, see Israel 2001, ch. 11. Some have suggested that Van Velthuysen here misunderstands Spinoza's position in the TTP, conflating it with Meyer's (in Meyer 1666). But he clearly understands that Spinoza does not think reason should be the interpreter of Scripture, not only here, but also below, at IV/215/15–22.

5. [Spinoza's note]: "He is wrong to say this, for I expressly showed that miracles don't give any knowledge of God, but that [such knowledge] is drawn much better from the fixed order of nature." [This note, written in Dutch, comes from the NS, and is not in the OP. It's not clear that Spinoza has cause to complain of what Van Velthuysen says here, or that his response is to the point. Spinoza plainly does hold that *if we take a miracle to be, by definition, an event contrary to the laws of nature*, there are, and can be, no miracles (TTP vi, 7–12). He goes on to allow that if we take the term "miracle" to mean an event whose natural cause we can't explain by showing it to be an example of the usual order of things—or at least, an event which can't be so explained by the person who relates the story of the miracle—there can be miracles (TTP vi, 13–15). But

to the laws of nature. For he maintains, as we pointed out, that the natures of things and their order are something no less necessary than the nature of God and the eternal truths. So he teaches that it's no
 5 more possible for something to deviate from the laws of nature than it is for the three angles of a triangle not to equal two right angles. God can't bring it about that a lesser weight raises a heavier one, or that a body moving with two degrees of motion can overtake one moving with four degrees. So he maintains that miracles are subject
 10 to the common laws of nature, which he teaches are as immutable as the natures of things, because the natures themselves are contained in the laws of nature. Nor does he allow any other power of God than his ordinary power, which is revealed according to the laws of nature, and which he thinks cannot be feigned to be different, because that would destroy the natures of things and be inconsistent.

15 [12] *A miracle, according to the Author, is therefore something unexpected, whose cause the common people are ignorant of.*⁶ For example, when, after prayers have been properly performed, it seems that some evil which threatened has been warded off, or some coveted good obtained, the common people say this results from the power of prayers and from
 20 God's special guidance. But according to the author's view, God had already decreed, unconditionally, from eternity, that those things would happen which the common people think happen by [God's] intervention and the efficacy [of prayers]. On his view, the prayers are not the cause of the decree; the decree is the cause of the prayers.⁷

[13] All that about fate and the unconquerable necessity of things (both as regards their natures and as regards daily occurrences) he bases
 25 on the nature of God—or to speak more clearly, on the nature of God's will and intellect, which are indeed different in name, but in God really converge. He maintains, therefore, that God has necessarily willed this universe and whatever happens successively in it as necessarily as he knows this same universe. Moreover, if God necessarily knows this
 30 universe and its laws—as he also knows the eternal truths contained in those laws—he infers that God could no more have established

Van Velthuysen clearly has in mind the first definition, according to which Spinoza does indeed deny that miracles occur. Note that Spinoza does not accuse Van Velthuysen of misrepresenting him on this issue when he replies in Letter 43.]

6. The words italicized here are also italicized in the OP, normally the sign of a quotation. They don't quote exactly any passage in TTP vi, but do seem to be a fair paraphrase of views expressed in vi, 3, and vi, 14.

7. I have been unable to locate passages in which Spinoza makes all the claims about prayer which Van Velthuysen ascribes to him in this paragraph. But he does make some of them in the Preface, §§3–4, and in vi, 49. The rest seem to be in the spirit of his philosophy. Spinoza does not reply on this issue in Letter 43.

another universe than he could have destroyed the natures of things and made two times three equal seven. So just as we can't conceive anything different from this universe and its laws, according to which
 [IV/212] things come into being and pass away, but whatever we can feign of this kind destroys itself, similarly he teaches that the Nature of the divine intellect, and of the whole universe, and of the laws according to which nature proceeds, is so constituted that God could no more have understood by his intellect any things different from those which now
 5 are than it could happen that things now are different from themselves.

He claims, then, that just as God can't now bring about things which destroy themselves, so he can't feign or know natures different from those which now are, because the comprehension and understanding of those natures is as impossible as is the production now of
 10 things different from those which now are. (In the Author's opinion this would involve a contradiction.) All those natures, if conceived to be different from those which now are, would necessarily also be inconsistent with those which now are. For since the natures of the things contained in this universe are (in the Author's opinion) neces-
 15 sary, they cannot have that necessity from themselves, but must have it from the nature of God, from which they emanate necessarily. For he does not maintain, with Descartes (whose doctrine he nevertheless wants to seem to have adopted), that the natures of all things, as they are different from God's nature and essence, so their ideas are freely in the divine mind.

20 [14] With the things we've now spoken about, the Author has prepared the way for what he presents at the end of the book. Everything in the preceding chapters has been directed to this: he wants to inculcate in the Magistrate's mind, and in everyone else's, this axiom: it's the right of the Magistrate to establish what divine worship is to be publicly
 25 maintained in the State.

Next, it's right for the Magistrate to permit his citizens to think and speak about religion as their hearts and minds tell them to. He ought to grant his subjects that freedom, even with respect to acts of external worship, as far as he can, consistently with their attachment to moral
 30 virtues, *or* piety, remaining intact. For since there can be no controversy concerning moral virtue, and the knowledge and practice of the other things involve no moral virtue, from that he infers that it can't be displeasing to God whatever things men otherwise embrace as sacred.

The Author is speaking here about sacred matters which don't constitute moral virtue, and don't impinge on it, which aren't contrary to
 [IV/213] virtue, or foreign to it, but which men undertake and profess as aids of the true virtues, so that by their zeal for those virtues they can be

accepted by and pleasing to God. God is not offended by their zeal for and practice of things which, though they're indifferent, and don't
5 contribute anything to virtue or vice, nevertheless men relate to the practice of piety, and use as aids to the cultivation of virtue.

[15] To prepare men's hearts to embrace these paradoxes the Author maintains:

first, that the whole worship established by God and handed down
10 to the Jews, that is, to the citizens of the Israelite Republic, was only set up that they might live successfully in their Republic; but

[secondly] that in other respects the Jews were not precious or pleasing to God beyond the other nations, and

[thirdly] that God repeatedly made this known to the Jews, through the Prophets, when he reproached them for their ignorance and error,
15 because they placed holiness and piety in the worship God established and commanded them to perform, when it ought only to have been placed in zeal for moral virtues, that is, in the love of God and of one's neighbor.

[16] Moreover, since God fashioned the heart of all nations with
20 the principles, and as it were, the seeds of the virtues, so that they judge spontaneously concerning the difference between good and evil, with hardly any instruction, he concludes that God did not consider the other nations lacking the things by which true blessedness can be achieved, but offered himself equally graciously to all men.

25 [17] Indeed, to make the nations equal to the Jews in everything which can be of use, and in some way an aid to achieving true happiness, he maintains that the nations did not lack true prophets, and provides examples to prove this. Indeed, he hints that God ruled the other nations through good angels whom he (in accordance with Old
30 Testament custom) calls Gods. For that reason, [he claims], the sacred practices of the other nations did not displease God, so long as they were not so corrupted by human superstition that they made men hostile to true holiness, and did not drive them to do, in religion, things inconsistent with virtue. But, he maintains, for special reasons, peculiar to the Jews, God prohibited them from worshipping the Gods of the nations, whom, in accordance with what God established and arranged,
[IV/214] the Nations worshipped as properly as the Jews, in their fashion, numbered the Angels appointed as guardians of the Jewish State among the Gods and accorded them divine honors.

5 [18] Since our Author thinks it's generally admitted that external worship is not pleasing to God in itself, he thinks it matters little what ceremonies are used in external worship, provided the worship is so

suited to God that it arouses reverence for God in men's minds and moves them to zeal for virtue.

10 [19] Next, since he thinks that

[i] the main point of all religion is contained in the practice of virtue, and that

[ii] any knowledge of mysteries is superfluous, if it is not in itself naturally suited to promote virtue, and that

[iii] knowledge should be considered more powerful and necessary as it contributes more to educating men to virtue and rousing them to it, he claims that

15 [iv] all opinions about God and his worship, and about everything pertaining to religion, are to be approved, or at least not rejected, if they're true in the opinion of those who favor them, and are so established that uprightness may thrive and flourish.

To establish this doctrine he cites the Prophets themselves as the authors of, and witnesses to, his opinion. Having learned that God
20 considers it unimportant what opinions men have about religion, but that all worship and opinions are pleasing to God if they proceed from a zeal for virtue and reverence for divinity, they took such liberties that they even offered arguments to incite men to virtue when the arguments were indeed not true in themselves, but were merely thought
25 to be true by the people they were addressing, and naturally suited to spur them to prepare themselves more eagerly for the practice of virtue. He affirms, then, that God permitted the Prophets to use those arguments which would be adapted to the times and reasoning of the people, and which they, according to their understanding of things,
30 thought good and effective.

[20] He thinks that's why some Divine Teachers used one kind of argument, and others, others, often using arguments inconsistent with one another—for example, why Paul taught that man is not justified by works, whereas James advocated the opposite view. James, the author thinks, saw that Christians take the doctrine of justification by faith off in a different
[IV/215] direction, and so proves by many arguments that man is justified by faith and by works. For he understood that it wasn't in the interests of the Christians of his time to advocate and propose, as Paul had done, that doctrine about faith according to which men rested quietly in God's
5 mercy, and had almost no concern for good works. Paul was addressing the Jews, who erroneously placed their Justification in the works of the law, specially handed down to them by Moses, by which they'd been raised above the nations. Thinking that a way to blessedness was prepared for

them alone, they rejected that account of salvation by faith which made
 10 them equal to the nations and deprived them of all their privileges.

Since each proposition, then—both Paul’s and James’s—contributed admirably to making men apply their minds to piety, each according to the different circumstances of the times when they were preaching and the people they were preaching to, the Author thinks it was a matter of Apostolic prudence to teach now this doctrine and now that.

15 [21] And this is one reason (among many others) why the Author thinks it is very far from the truth to try to explain the sacred text by reason and to establish it as the interpreter of Scripture, or to interpret one holy Teacher through another, since they are of equal authority, and the words they used are to be explained by the manner of speaking and
 20 the property of the language familiar to those Teachers. In investigating Scripture’s true meaning, [the Author thinks,] we must attend only to its literal meaning, not to the nature of the thing.

Christ himself, then, and the other Teachers God sent, led the way by their example and practice, and showed that only by zeal
 25 for the virtues do men proceed to happiness, and that other things ought to be thought of no importance. From that the Author tries to show that the Magistrate’s only concern ought to be that justice and uprightness flourish in the Republic, but that it is no part of his duty to decide what worship and what doctrine are most in accord
 30 with the truth. He need only take care that things not be accepted which pose an obstacle to virtue, even according to the opinion of those who profess them.⁸

The Magistrate, therefore, without offense to the divinity, can easily tolerate different forms of worship in his Republic. To make this convincing, the Author takes the following course. He offers an account of the moral virtues—insofar as they are useful in Societies and concerned with
 [IV/216] external actions—according to which no one is obliged to practice them according to his private judgment and initiative, but the cultivation, practice and regulation of the virtues depend on the authority and command of the Magistrate. This is true for two reasons: first, because the external
 5 acts expressing the virtues take their nature from the circumstances, and second, because a man’s duty regarding which external acts of this kind ought to be performed is judged by the advantage or disadvantage arising from them. So those external acts not done at the right time lose the nature of virtues, and their opposites ought to be counted as virtues.

8. Perhaps an allusion to the doctrine of original sin, which might be an obstacle to virtue if it was thought to teach that fallen man is so corrupt that he has no power to do good, and therefore need not try.

The Author thinks there is another kind of virtues, which, inso-
 10 far as they subsist within the Mind, always keep their nature and
 do not depend on the changeable state of circumstances. [23] It is
 never permitted to anyone to be disposed to cruelty or savagery,
 not loving either his neighbor or the truth. But occasions can occur
 15 when it may be permitted, not indeed to set aside the mind's inten-
 tion and devotion to the virtues mentioned, but either to refrain
 from the external acts [the virtues would normally require], or even
 to do things which, as far as external appearance is concerned, are
 thought to be inconsistent with these virtues. So it may happen that
 it's no longer the duty of a decent man to state the truth openly,
 20 and to share it, either orally or in writing, with [his fellow] citizens,
 and communicate it to them—[not, for example,] if we think more
 harm than good will come to the citizens from that publication. And
 although each of us ought to embrace all men in love, and it's never
 permitted to abandon this affect, nevertheless, it turns out rather
 25 frequently that we can treat certain men harshly without this vice,
 when it's established that the mercy we are prepared to use toward
 them will lead to great evil for us.

So, indeed, everyone agrees that not all truths—whether they per-
 tain to religion or to civil life—are fittingly told at all times. No one
 30 thinks that roses should be cast before swine, if there's a risk that the
 swine will rage against those who offer them the roses. Similarly, no
 one thinks a good man has a duty to teach ordinary people certain
 basic doctrines of religion, when there's a fear that if they were spread
 among ordinary people, they would so disturb the Republic or the
 Church that more harm than good would result, both for citizens
 and saints alike.

[IV/217] Moreover, Civil Societies, from which rule and the authority to make
 laws cannot be separated, have also established, among other things,
 the principle that what would be useful to men united in a civil body,
 must not be left to the decision of individuals, but yielded to the rul-
 ers. From that the Author proves that the Magistrate has a right to
 5 decide what kind of doctrines, and which doctrines, ought to be taught
 publicly in the Republic, and that subjects have a duty to refrain, as
 far as external profession is concerned, from teaching and professing
 doctrines the Magistrate has decreed there should be public silence
 about. For God did not allow the judgment of private individuals [to
 determine what doctrines they would publicly profess] any more than
 10 he permitted them to do things contrary to the Magistrate's intentions
 and decrees, or the judges' decision, by which the force of the laws
 would be mocked and the Magistrates frustrated in their end.

The Author thinks men can agree about things of this kind, regarding external worship and its profession, and that external acts of Divine worship can be committed to the Judgment of the Magistrate as safely
 15 as is conceded to him the right and 'power to appraise an injury done to the state and to punish it by force. For a private individual is not bound to adapt his own judgment to the judgment of the Magistrate concerning an injury done to the state, but can still have his own opinion (though he is bound, if necessary, to do his part in carrying out the
 20 Magistrate's judgment). In the same way, the Author thinks, it is within the province of private individuals in a State to judge about truth and falsity, and also about the necessity, of some doctrine. He holds that a private individual cannot be bound by the laws of the state to think the same about religion [as the Magistrate does], even though it may
 25 depend on the Magistrate's judgment what doctrines ought to be publicly propounded and private citizens have a duty to keep to themselves any religious opinions which disagree with the Magistrate's, and not to do anything which would prevent the laws established by the Magistrate concerning worship from maintaining their force.

30 But because it can happen that a Magistrate who disagrees with many of the ordinary people about the fundamental principles of religion wants some things to be publicly taught which the people's judgment rejects, and nevertheless thinks it a matter of the divine honor that there be a public profession of such doctrines in his Republic, the Author sees that a difficulty remains: very great harm could be done to the citizens
 [IV/218] because the Magistrate's judgment differs from that of ordinary people.⁹ So to the preceding argument he adds this other one, which at the same time calms the minds both of the Magistrate and of his subjects, and preserves freedom of religion intact. Namely, the Magistrate does not
 5 have to fear God's anger, even though he permits what in his judgment are improper religious practices to occur in his Republic, provided they are not in conflict with moral virtues and do not subvert them.

The reason for this opinion cannot escape you, since I have already explained it fully above. The Author maintains that God is indifferent to, is not concerned with, what kind of opinions men cherish in religion, and approve and uphold in their heart, or what kind of religious
 10 practices they publicly engage in, since all these things ought to be regarded as having no relation to virtue and vice—although everyone has a duty to conduct his reasoning in such a way that he holds those

9. Van Velthuysen may be thinking of Philip II's effort to repress the Reformation in the territories which revolted against his rule toward the end of the sixteenth century, creating the United Provinces.

doctrines, and engages in that worship, with which he thinks he can make the greatest progress in the pursuit of virtue.

- 15 Here, most Distinguished Sir, you have a brief account of the main points of the teaching of this Theologico-politician. In my judgment his teaching destroys and completely subverts all worship and religion, secretly introduces Atheism, or at least imagines a God who cannot move men to reverence for his Divinity. His God is subjected to fate;
20 no room is left for any divine governance or providence; the whole distribution of punishments and rewards is destroyed. At least it's easy to see from the Author's writing that the authority of the whole of Sacred Scripture is shattered by his reasoning and arguments, and that it is mentioned by the Author only for the sake of the appearances. It
25 follows from his positions that the Koran must be regarded as equal to the Word of God. The Author does not have even one argument by which he might prove that Mohammed was not a true Prophet, because the Turks too, in accordance with the prescriptions of their Prophet, cultivate moral virtues concerning which there is no dispute among the nations. Moreover, according to the Author's teaching, it is
30 not unusual for God to also bring the nations which did not receive the oracles given to the Jews and Christians into the circle of reason and obedience by other revelations.

So I think I am not deviating very far from the truth, or doing the Author any injustice, if I denounce him for teaching pure Atheism, by disguised and counterfeit arguments.

[Lambertus van Velthuysen
Utrecht, 24 January 1671]¹⁰

[IV/219b]

LETTER 43 (A)

TO THE MOST LEARNED AND DISTINGUISHED JACOB OSTENS
FROM B. D. S.

[answer to the preceding letter]

Friend,

- 20 No doubt you're surprised that I have made you wait so long, but till now I could hardly bring myself to reply to that man's pamphlet,¹¹ which you wanted to share with me. Even now, my only reason for

10. The date in AHW. Van de Ven *Facts* dates it between 4 and 17 February.

11. Spinoza's word here is *libellum*, which can mean a small book or pamphlet. The length of Van Velthuysen's "letter" may have encouraged Spinoza to suspect that it was intended for circulation. Cf. Letter 69.

doing this is that I promised you. But to satisfy both you and myself, as much as possible, I'll keep my promise as succinctly as I can, and
 25 show briefly how wrongly he has interpreted my meaning. Whether he did this from malice or from ignorance, I can't easily say.¹² But to the matter.

First, he says: *it's not important to know what my nation is, or what way of life I follow*.¹³ But of course if he had known, he would not so easily
 30 have persuaded himself that I teach atheism. For atheists are accustomed to seek honors and riches immoderately.¹⁴ But I have always scorned those things. Everyone who knows me knows that.

[IV/220b] Next, to prepare the path to his goal, he says I am *not stupid*, so that
 20 he can more easily persuade people that I've written *skillfully, cunningly, and maliciously, for the most wicked cause of the Deists*.¹⁵ This shows well enough that he hasn't understood my arguments. Who can be so intellectually skillful and cunning that he can give, insincerely, so many and such strong arguments for a thing he regards as false? Who, I say,
 25 will he afterward think has written sincerely if he thinks fictions can be as solidly demonstrated as truths? But I don't wonder now at this. For Voetius once defamed Descartes in the same way.¹⁶ So the best men are always maligned.

Next, he continues: *to avoid the fault of superstition, he seems to have cast off all religion*.¹⁷ What he understands by Religion, and what by
 30 superstition, I don't know. Has someone who maintains that God must be recognized as the highest good, and that he should be freely loved as such, cast off all religion? Is someone who holds that our greatest happiness and freedom consist only in this [love of God] irreligious? Or that the reward of virtue is virtue itself, whereas the punishment of folly and weakness is folly itself? And finally, that each person ought
 [IV/221b] to love his neighbor and obey the commands of the supreme 'power?

12. At this point the autograph shows a passage Spinoza wrote and then struck out: "for both the cunning and the superstitious and ignorant commonly have an evil intention; however that may be, his insults don't bother me; I know how men like that are accustomed to treat honest men; so to sum up briefly what I want to show, I'll note only a few of the many things he's said. You must draw your own conclusions about the rest." After he deleted this passage, Spinoza replaced it with *Sed ad rem*, but to the matter.

13. Cf. IV/207/13, paraphrased rather than quoted exactly.

14. Note that Spinoza does not offer this as a definition of atheism, however much it might articulate a popular seventeenth-century conception of that position. He offers it merely as a general, not universal, characteristic of atheists.

15. Here the words italicized are not italicized in the text. But Spinoza gives what amounts to a direct quotation of IV/207/27–28.

16. Spinoza's example reminds Van Velthuysen that he too might have been subjected to the same accusation: he was a Cartesian, and Spinoza knows it. (IV/222b/23)

17. Cf. IV/207/22–23.

20 Not only have I explicitly said these things, I have also proven them by the strongest arguments.

But I think I see what mud this man is stuck in. He finds nothing in virtue itself, or in understanding, which delights him, and he would prefer to live according to the impulse of his affects, if one thing did not stand in his way: he fears punishment. So he abstains from evil actions, and obeys the divine commandments, like a slave, reluctantly
 25 and with a vacillating heart. For this slavery he expects God to load him down with gifts far more pleasant to him than the love of God. And he expects this all the more, the more he resists the good he does and the more unwillingly he does it. As a result, he believes everyone not held back by this fear lives without restraint and casts off all religion.

30 But enough of these things. I pass to the deduction by which he tries to show that *I teach atheism by disguised and counterfeit arguments*.¹⁸ The foundation of his reasoning is this: he thinks I take away God's freedom and subject him to fate. This is false, of course. For I've maintained that everything follows with inevitable necessity from God's nature in the same way everyone maintains that it follows from God's nature that he
 [IV/222b] understands himself. Of course, no one denies that [God's understanding of himself] follows necessarily from the divine nature. Nevertheless, no
 20 one conceives that God has been coerced by some fate, but [everyone thinks] God understands himself completely freely, even if necessarily. I find nothing here which anyone can't perceive. Nevertheless, if he believes these things are said with evil intent, what does he think about his Descartes, who maintained that everything we do was previously
 25 preordained by God,¹⁹ who indeed creates us anew, as it were, at each moment,²⁰ and that nevertheless we act from the freedom of our will. Surely, as Descartes himself confesses, no one can comprehend this.²¹

Next, this inevitable necessity of things does not destroy either divine or human laws. For whether moral teachings take the form of a law
 30 from God himself or not, they are still divine and salutary. Whether we receive the good which follows from virtue and divine love from God as a Judge, or because it emanates from the necessity of the divine nature, it is not for that reason either more or less desirable. Similarly, the evils which follow from evil deeds are not less to be feared because they follow from them necessarily.

18. AHW add italics to words not italicized in the OP. With slight modification, the words are a quotation of IV/218/33–34.

19. Cf. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* I, 40 (AT 1974–86, VIII-1, 20).

20. Cf. Descartes, *Meditation III* (AT 1974–86, VII, 49).

21. Cf. Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* I, 41 (AT 1974–86, VIII-1, 20).

[IV/223b] Finally, whether we do what we do necessarily or freely, we are still led by hope or fear. So he's wrong when he says that *I maintain that*
 20 *there's no place for precepts and commands*,²² or as he continues afterward, *that there is no expectation of reward or punishment, when all things are ascribed to fate, and it is maintained that all things emanate from God with inevitable necessity*.²³

I do not ask here and now why it is the same thing (or not much different) to maintain that all things emanate necessarily from God's nature and that the universe itself is God.²⁴ But I should like you to
 25 note what he quickly adds, no less offensively: namely, *that I don't hold that a man ought to attend to virtue because of God's precepts and law, or because he hopes for a reward or fears punishment, but, etc.*²⁵

Of course, you won't find this anywhere in my treatise. On the contrary, I said explicitly in Ch. 4 that the chief point of the divine law—
 30 which I said (in Ch. 12) has been inscribed divinely in our mind—and its main precept is that we should love God as the greatest good, not from fear of any punishment (for love can't arise from fear), and not from love of anything else in which we wish to delight (for then we would love, not so much God himself, as the other thing we desire).

Moreover, I showed in the same chapter that God revealed this very law to the prophets.²⁶ And whether I maintain that that law of God
 [IV/224b] has received the form of a law from God himself, or I conceive it like
 20 the rest of God's decrees, which involve eternal necessity and truth, it will nevertheless remain God's decree and a salutary teaching. And whether I love God freely or from the necessity of his decree, I shall nevertheless love God, and I will be saved.

25 So I can affirm here and now: that man is one of those of whom I said at the end of my preface [§34] that I would prefer that they neglect my book completely, rather than be troublesome by interpreting it perversely, as they usually do everything. They do themselves no good; others they harm.

22. Cf. IV/208/6–7.

23. IV/208/29–32.

24. Here Spinoza seems willing to accept the proposition that all things emanate from God, but to deny that it follows that the universe is God, and to regard that inference as “offensive” (*odiosus*). However, in a remark reported in the Stolle-Hallmann travel diary he may accept the equation: “To the objection that if this Universe is God, then men are parts of God, Spinoza used to answer: God *or* this Universe is infinite, but the infinite is not a whole, and therefore does not even have parts” (Freudenthal 1899, 223; Gebhardt/Walther 1998, 128).

25. IV/209/3–6.

26. Cf. TTP xii, 34.

Although I would think what I have written is enough to show what
 30 I wanted to, I nevertheless thought it would be worthwhile to note a few further things:

[1] he is wrong to think that I had in mind *that axiom of the theologians who distinguish between the speech of a prophet who is propounding a doctrine and that of one who is simply relating something*. [IV/210/10–13] For if by this axiom he understands the one I attributed in Chapter 15 to a certain Rabbi Jehuda Alfakhar, how could I think that mine agrees with it, since in that chapter I rejected it as false? But if he's thinking of something else,
 [IV/225b] I confess I still don't know what, and so could not have had it in mind.

[2] Next, I also don't see why he says [IV/210/14–15] that I think
 20 *everyone who denies that reason and philosophy are the interpreter of Scripture will follow my opinion*. For I refuted their opinion as well as that of Maimonides.

It would take too long to enumerate all the passages where he shows that he has not made his judgment about me with a completely dispassionate mind, so I pass to his conclusion, where he says
 25

[3] *that I have no argument left to me by which I might prove that Mohammed was not a true prophet*. He tries, indeed, to show this from my opinions. Nevertheless, it clearly follows from them that Mohammed was an impostor, since he completely takes away that freedom which
 30 the Universal religion concedes (by the natural light and by what the prophets revealed), which I have shown by all means ought to be granted.

But even if this were not the case, I ask you: am I bound to show that anyone is a false prophet? Surely the contrary is true: the prophets were bound to show that they were true.

If he should reply that Mohammed also taught the divine law and gave certain signs of his mission, as the other prophets did, there
 [IV/226b] will surely be no reason why he should deny that Mohammed was a true prophet. Moreover, as far as the Turks and the other nations are concerned, if they worship God with the practice of justice and with
 20 loving-kindness toward their neighbor, I believe they have the spirit of Christ and are saved, whatever, in their ignorance, they may believe about Mohammed and the oracles.²⁷

There, my friend, you see how far that man has wandered from the truth. Nevertheless I grant that he does me no injury, but himself the greatest injury, when he does not blush to say that I teach atheism by disguised and counterfeit arguments.

27. So if we understand pluralism as the doctrine that salvation is possible in many religions, Spinoza is a pluralist. On this topic, see Letter 76 and Curley 2010.

25 For the rest, I don't think you will find anything here which you could judge to have been said too harshly against that man. However, if you do come upon anything like that, I beg you either to delete it, or to correct it, as it seems best to you. For whoever he may be, it's not my intention to provoke him, and to acquire enemies of my own
 30 making. Because this often happens in such debates, I could hardly prevail upon myself to reply. I could not have prevailed, if I had not promised. Farewell. I commit this letter to your prudence, I who am, etc.
 [The Hague, February 1671]

[IV/227a]

LETTER 44 (NS)

TO THE MOST WORTHY AND WISE

JARIG JELLES

FROM B. D. S.

Dear Friend,

When Professor . . .²⁸ visited me recently, he said, among other things, that he had heard that my *Theological-Political Treatise* has been translated into Dutch,²⁹ and that someone (he didn't know who) intended to have
 10 it printed. So I beg you, very earnestly, to please find out about this, to prevent the printing, if that's possible. This is not only my request, but also that of many of my good friends, who would not like to see
 15 this book prohibited.³⁰ If it's published in Dutch, that will doubtless happen. I don't doubt that you will do me and the cause this service.

Some time ago one of my friends sent me a little book, titled *Homo Politicus*, or *Political Man*,³¹ which I'd previously heard a lot about. I've read through it and found it to be the most harmful book men can

28. Neither the NS nor the OP gives the name. Wolf, followed by AHW, conjectured that it might have been Theodore Kranen, a Cartesian professor at the University of Leiden, mentioned at the beginning of Letter 67. For more on Kranen, see Meinsma 1983, 475. Johannes Graevius, the addressee of Letter 49, has also been suggested (Meinsma 1983, 392).

29. It's thought that, in addition to the other support Jelles gave Spinoza, he may also have subsidized this translation. The theory is that that's why it was Jelles Spinoza wrote to, when he wanted to halt publication of that translation. According to Duijkerius (1991, 195), Glazemaker was the translator. His translation did not appear until 1693, when it was published under the provocative title *De rechtzinnige theoloogant, of godgeleerde staatkundige verhandelinge* (*The orthodox theologian, or theological-political treatise*).

30. Israel 1996 argues that "Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* was never freely in circulation, or on sale, in the United Provinces, not even in the first few months after its publication, even though there was no formal ban against the work by the States of Holland until July 1674." On the initial reaction to the TTP, see also Nadler 2011.

31. *Homo politicus*, published anonymously in 1664, is generally attributed to Christopher Rapp, Chancellor to the Elector of Brandenburg.

devise. The Author's supreme goods are money and honor. He organizes his teaching for these ends and shows how to reach them: by rejecting all religion internally, and externally professing whatever can most serve your advancement. In addition, you should not be true to anyone, except insofar as it's to your advantage. For the rest, he puts the highest value on dissembling, promising without performing, lying, false oaths, and many other things.

When I read this, I thought about writing a little book indirectly against it, in which I would treat of the supreme good, and further, to show the anxious and miserable condition of those who are greedy for money and honor, and finally, by clear reasoning and many examples to show that Republics which have an insatiable desire for honor and money must necessarily perish, and that they have [in fact] perished.³²

How much better and more excellent the thoughts of Thales of Miletus were than those of this Author will be evident from the following reasoning. All things, he said, are common among friends; the wise are friends of the gods; [OP: all things belong to the gods]; [IV/229] therefore, all things belong to the wise.³³ In this way this very wise man made himself the richest of all, more by nobly scorning wealth than by greedily pursuing it.

On another occasion³⁴ he showed that it is not by necessity, but voluntarily, that the wise possess no wealth. For when his friends reproached him for his poverty, he made them this reply: "do you want me to prove that I can acquire what I consider unworthy of my labor, and what you seek so eagerly?" When they said "yes," he leased all the presses in Greece. For being very experienced in the movement of the stars, he had seen that that year there would be a great abundance of olives, whereas there had been a shortage in preceding years. He leased out at a high price presses he had leased for very little money, because people needed to use them to press the oil from the olives. By doing this, he acquired in one year great wealth for himself, which he

32. One example Spinoza would likely have given was the Roman Republic, portrayed by the historians of its declining days as a state whose fall was due to its corruption by greed and ambition. Cf. Earl 1961, ch. 4.

33. I have been unable to locate a source for attributing this argument to Thales, but its first premise, that friends have all things in common, was already proverbial in the time of Terence. Cf. his *Adelphi* 803, cited in Letter 2. As Wolf noted, the bracketed clause is present in the OP version but not in the NS. Since it seems necessary for the conclusion Spinoza draws, its absence in the NS is a probably the result of inadvertent omission when the letter was set in type and an indication that the OP translation was done from the manuscript, not from the NS.

34. This story is told (very briefly) in Diogenes Laertius (*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* I, 26) and much more fully in Aristotle (*Politics* I, 11, 1259a5ff.).

subsequently shared with as much generosity as he had shown cleverness in acquiring it.

I close with a declaration that I am, etc.
The Hague, 17 February 1671

[IV/230]

LETTER 45 (OP)

TO
THE ILLUSTRIOUS AND MOST DISTINGUISHED
MR. B. D. S.
FROM GOTTFRIED LEIBNIZ

Illustrious and Most Esteemed Sir,

Among the other praises the common report has bestowed on You, I understand that you also have outstanding skill in Optics.³⁵ That's why I wanted to send You my essay, such as it is. I will not easily find a better critic for this sort of study. I've titled the piece I'm sending
10 you, *A Note on Advanced Optics*,³⁶ and have published it so that I could more conveniently share it with friends or with those interested in the subject. I hear also that the Esteemed Hudde is distinguished in this kind of study, and I do not doubt that You know him very well. So you would add wonderfully to your kindness if you also got me his judgment
15 and approval. The article itself explains sufficiently what its subject is.

I believe you have received the *Prodromo*³⁷ of Francis Lana, S.J., written in Italian, where he also proposes some excellent things in Dioptrics. But also a young Swiss, Joh. Oltius,³⁸ who is very erudite in these matters, has published his *Physico-Mechanical Thoughts on Vision*, in
20 which he partly promises a certain very simple and general instrument for polishing lenses of every kind, and partly says that he has found a way of collecting *all* the rays coming from *all* the points of an object, into as many other corresponding points—but only for an object at a certain distance and of a certain shape.

35. I have discussed Leibniz's early relations with Spinoza briefly in the Editorial Preface to these letters, and more fully in Curley 1990a. Though Leibniz does not mention the TTP, it's clear from his correspondence that he had read it, and knew full well that Spinoza was its author. Van de Ven *Facts*, ch. 9, provides thorough documentation. On the general subject of Leibniz's relation to Spinoza the work to read now is Laerke 2008.

36. Published in Frankfurt in 1671, and now available in the Akademie edition, VIII, i, 131–36.

37. Franciscus Lana (1631–1687) was a Professor of Philosophy and Mathematics in Rome. His *Prodromo* was published in Brescia in 1670.

38. This is apparently Johannes Heinrich Ott. See *Continuum Companion* 2011, 28.

25 For the rest, what I've proposed comes to this: not that all the rays of *all* the points are gathered again—for as far as we know now, this is impossible in any object, whatever its distance and shape—but that the rays of the points outside the optic axis, as well as the rays of points on the optic axis, are gathered, and therefore, that the apertures of the
[IV/231] lenses can be made as large as you wish without loss of distinct vision. But these matters will await Your most acute judgment. Farewell, Most Esteemed Sir, and be well-disposed toward

your faithful admirer,
Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz,
5 Doctor of Laws and Councillor of Mainz
Frankfurt, 5 October (new style) 1671

P.S.: If you deem me worthy of a reply, I hope the very noble Jurist Diemerbroeck³⁹ will be glad to forward it. I think you have seen my *New Physical Hypothesis*.⁴⁰ If not, I shall send it.

10 To M. Spinoza
The Very Celebrated Scientist
And Very Profound Philosopher
Par couvert at Amsterdam⁴¹

39. Apparently Johannes de Diemerbroeck, a correspondent of Leibniz who lived in Utrecht, not IJsbrand Diemerbroeck, professor of medicine at Utrecht, who condemned Adriaan Koerbagh for his impiety. Cf. AHW, 487 with Meinsma 1983, 383n.

40. Leibniz's *Hypothesis physica nova* was first published in Mainz, in 1671, in two parts: *The Theory of Abstract Motion* (dedicated to the French Academy) and *The Theory of Concrete Motion* (dedicated to the British Royal Society). Now available in Leibniz, Akademie edition, VI, ii, 219–57. Loemker translated the first part in Leibniz, Loemker, 139–42. He comments that it antedates Leibniz's Paris period, when “under the particular tutelage of Huyghens, [he first] developed [an] adequate understanding of the issues in modern mathematics and physics.”

41. Though Leibniz's letter is written in Latin, this address is written in French. In addressing Spinoza as a *Medecin tres celebre*, Leibniz is identifying him as a scientist, not a medical doctor (Gebhardt/Walther 1986). Evidently Leibniz is misinformed about Spinoza's address, not realizing that at this point he is living in The Hague.

IV/231b]

LETTER 46 (A)

TO
THE MOST ERUDITE AND NOBLE
MR. GOTTFRIED LEIBNIZ,
J.U.D. AND COUNSELOR OF MAINZ,
FROM B. D. S.

(Reply to the Preceding)

25 Most Learned and Noble Sir,

I've read the paper you kindly sent me, and I thank you very much for sharing it with me. I regret that I haven't been able to follow your train of thought adequately, although I believe you explained it clearly enough. I beg you, therefore, not to decline to reply to me about these few matters:

[IV/232b]

[1] Do you believe there is any reason why we ought to make the aperture of lenses small, other than that the rays which come from one point do not meet exactly in another point, but in a small space (which we usually call a mechanical point), which is larger or smaller, in proportion to the size of the aperture?

[2] Next, I ask whether the lenses you call "Pandochal"⁴² correct this fault? that is, whether the mechanical point, *or* the small space in which the rays coming from the same point meet after refraction, remains the same in size, whether the opening is large or small? For if they do, it will be possible to increase their aperture as much as you like, and hence, they will be far more excellent than any other figures known to me.

Otherwise, I don't see why you commend them as so far superior to the common lenses. For circular lenses have the same axis everywhere.⁴³ So when we use them, all the points on the object must be considered as lying on the optical axis. Although not all the points on the object are at the same distance, nevertheless, the difference arising from that is not perceptible when the objects are very remote, because then the rays coming from the same point are considered as if they entered the lens parallel to one another.

[IV/233b]

Nevertheless, I do believe this: that when we want to take in several objects in one glance (as happens when we use very large convex ocular lenses), your lenses can help to represent all the objects at once more distinctly. But I shall suspend judgment about all these things

42. That is, capable of receiving all the rays of light.

43. Cf. Letter 40, IV/200–201.

until you explain your thinking to me more clearly. I earnestly entreat
25 you to do this.

I sent the second copy to Mr. Hudde, as you asked me to. He replies
that at the moment he doesn't have time to examine it, but he hopes
that in a week or two he will be free to do so.

Francis Lana's *Prodromus*⁴⁴ has not yet reached me. Neither have
30 the *Physico-mechanical thoughts* of Johannes Holt. What I regret more is
that I have also not been able to see your physical hypothesis. At least
it is not for sale here in The Hague. So if you send it to me, you will
make me most grateful. And if I can be of service to you in anything
at all, I will not fail to show that I am,

Most esteemed sir,

Wholly yours,

B. despinoza

The Hague, 9 November 1671

[IV/234] Mr. Dimerbruck does not live here. So I'm forced to give this to
the ordinary carrier. No doubt you know someone here in The Hague
who would be willing to take care of our correspondence. I should
like to know who that is, so that letters could be taken care of more
5 conveniently and securely. If the *Theological-political treatise* has not yet
reached you, I'll send a copy, if you don't mind. Farewell.⁴⁵

To the Most Noble and Esteemed Gentleman

Mr. Golfried [*sic*] Wilhelm Leibniz

Doctor of Law and Councillor of Mainz

Sent 8 December 1671

44. In this paragraph and the postscript I have normalized the treatment of titles. Spinoza's autographs typically use very little capitalization. Sometimes, but not always, they capitalize the beginning of a sentence; normally they do not capitalize the works in a book title. "Prodromus" is probably capitalized because in the Latin it comes at the beginning of a sentence.

45. The signature, address, date, and postscript were omitted in the OP. I take Spinoza's offer to send a copy of the TTP to Leibniz to be a tacit acknowledgment of his authorship. Leibniz had read the TTP over a year earlier, as we know from a letter to Jakob Thomasius, his former teacher at the University of Leipzig, praising Thomasius' critique of Spinoza's work (23 September 1670, Akademie edition, II, i, 66). Johannes Graevius had reported to him that Spinoza was said to be the author of this work (12 April 1671, Akademie edition, I, i, 141–43), a report he sometimes accepted (to Thomasius, 21 January 1672, II, i, 205; to Graevius, 5 May 1671, I, i, 148) and sometimes expressed doubt about (to Von Holten, 17 February 1672, II, i, 208). This is only a small selection of the references to Spinoza's work in Leibniz's correspondence, as the indices of these Akademie volumes will show. Perhaps significant is that Leibniz typically referred to Spinoza's work as a book "On the liberty of philosophizing."

[IV/234]

LETTER 47 (OP)

TO
THE VERY ACUTE AND RENOWNED PHILOSOPHER
B. D. S.
FROM J. LUDWIG FABRITIUS

Most Renowned Sir,

20 His Serene Highness, the Elector Palatine,⁴⁶ my Most Gracious Lord, has commanded me to write to You, whom I had indeed not known until now, but who has been most highly recommended to his Most Serene Highness, and to ask whether you would be inclined to take up an ordinary⁴⁷ Professorship of Philosophy in his renowned
25 University. You will receive the annual salary ordinary Professors enjoy today. Nowhere else will you find a Prince more favorable to men of outstanding intellect, among whom he judges you are one. You will
[IV/235] have the most ample liberty to philosophize,⁴⁸ which he believes you will not abuse to disturb the publicly established religion.

I could not fail to comply with the command of this wisest of Princes. Therefore, I beg you most earnestly to reply to me as soon as possible,
5 and to give your reply, either to his Serene Highness's resident in The Hague, Mr. Grotius, or to Mr. Gilles van der Hek, to be forwarded to me in the packet of letters which are usually sent to the court. Or you may use whatever other means seems most convenient.

I add this one thing: that if you come here, you will live pleasantly a
10 life worthy of a Philosopher, unless everything else turns out contrary to our hope and expectation.

Farewell, and Hail, Most Distinguished Sir,
From one who is Most Devoted to you,
J. Ludwig Fabritius
Professor, University of Heidelberg, and
Councillor to the Elector Palatine
Heidelberg, 16 February 1673

46. Karl Ludwig (1617–1680), the son of Frederick V and Elizabeth Stuart, thus the nephew of Charles I of England and the brother of that Princess Elizabeth who was Descartes' correspondent, not (as incautiously reported by some editors) the brother of his patron, Queen Christina of Sweden. He grew up in the Netherlands, studied at the University of Leiden, and spent time at the English Court in the 1630s and 1640s. He became Elector Palatine as a result of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. For more details, see the Editorial Preface, pp. 362–64.

47. An "ordinary" professorship was the equivalent, in German academic life, of what we call a full professorship.

48. Perhaps an allusion to the way the subject of the TTP was commonly designated by Leibniz and his correspondents.

LETTER 48, TO FABRITIUS

LETTER 48 (OP)

TO

THE MOST ESTEEMED AND NOBLE GENTLEMAN

MR. J. LUDWIG FABRITIUS

PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF HEIDELBERG, AND

COUNCILLOR TO THE ELECTOR PALATINE

FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Most Esteemed Sir,

If it had ever been my desire to take up a professorship in any faculty, I could have wished only for this one, which his Serene Highness, [IV/236] the Elector Palatine, is offering me, through you, especially because of the freedom of Philosophizing which your Most Gracious Prince is willing to grant, not to mention that I have long wished to live under the Rule of a Prince whose wisdom all admire.

5 But since it's never been my intention to teach publicly, I cannot be persuaded to embrace this excellent opportunity, even though I've weighed the matter for a long time. For first, I think that if I were willing to devote myself to educating young men, I would stop advancing in Philosophy. Second, I think I don't know what the limits of
10 that freedom of Philosophizing might have to be, for me not to seem to want to disturb the publicly established religion. In fact, schisms arise not so much from ardent zeal for Religion as from men's varying affects, or their eagerness to contradict one another. This results in their habit of distorting and condemning everything, even things rightly said. I have experienced these things already, while leading a
15 private and solitary life. How much more would I have to fear them after I rose to an office of this rank.

You see, then, Most Esteemed Sir, that I am not holding back because I hope for a better chance, but from a love of tranquillity, which I believe I can in some manner maintain, provided I abstain from public Lectures. So I most earnestly ask you to entreat his Most Serene Highness, the
20 Elector, to let me deliberate further about this matter, and then that you continue to procure the Most Gracious Prince's favor toward his most devoted supporter, that you may put under a greater obligation to yourself, Most Esteemed and Noble Sir,

Yours truly,

B. d. S.

The Hague, 30 March 1673

LETTER 48A⁴⁹

JARIG JELLES

PROFESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL AND CHRISTIAN FAITH
CONTAINED IN A LETTER TO N.N.

es/Spruit, 6] Honorable Friend,

I have more readily granted your earnest request to let you know through a letter my opinion regarding *my* faith, or Religion, since you declare that the Reason you were urging me to do this was only that some people are trying to convince you that *Cartesian Philosophers* (among whom you are pleased to count me) cherish a strange opinion, falling into ancient Paganism, and that their Propositions and foundations are contrary to the foundations of the Christian Religion and Piety, etc.

In maintaining my view, I'll first say that the Cartesian Philosophy touches Religion so little that Descartes' Propositions are followed, not only by various [Protestant] denominations, but also by the Roman [denomination]. So what I say about Religion must be taken only for my personal opinion, not for that of the Cartesians. Though I'm not inclined to dispute with others, or to silence the slanderers, for me it will be enough to satisfy you and those like you.

es/Spruit, 8] It was not my intention to prescribe a universal Creed, or to define the essential, fundamental, and necessary Articles of Belief, but only to tell you my opinion. Nevertheless, I'll try, to the best of my ability, to fulfill the Conditions required, in Jacob Acontius' judgment, for a universal Profession, acceptable to all Christians, namely, that it contain only what *necessarily must be known*, what *is very true and certain*, what *is certified and corroborated by testimonies*, and finally, what, so far as possible, *is expressed in the same words and ways of speaking the Holy Ghost used*.

Here, then, is a Profession which seems to me to be of that kind. Read it attentively. Don't judge it lightly. Be assured that, as I've taken a stand for the truth, so I seek to inspire it in you in this Letter.⁵⁰

49. On the history of this letter, see the Editorial Preface, pp. 367–68.

50. What we have up to this point is Jelles's introduction to his *Profession*. What follows is an abridged version of the *Profession*, omitting the passages from Scripture which he used to justify his affirmations. The affirmations themselves are generally quotations or paraphrases of scriptural passages, predominantly from the New Testament, with a strong emphasis on the letters of Paul, and the gospel of John. The section numbers which I have put in brackets are not in the text as Spruit presents it.

[§1] Of God, and his attributes⁵¹

I believe and profess that there is a God, or that God really exists . . . ; that he is unique . . . , eternal . . . , immutable . . . , omnipotent . . . , supremely wise or omniscient . . . , and the source of all good . . . ; that he created the Heaven, the Earth, the Sea, and everything in them; that all things are from him, and through him, and to him . . . ; that we also are in him, live in him, and move in him . . . ; that he sustains all his creatures, and each of them in particular, governs them, and works in them . . . ; and finally that he has made all his works good, or in the most perfect way, and that he always works in the most perfect way. . .

[§2] Of God's Son and the Holy Ghost⁵²

I believe and profess that there is a Son of God, and that our Lord Jesus Christ, insofar as his flesh or body is concerned, was born from David's seed, and is the Son of men; . . . [he is] God's Son, in respect to the sanctifying and life-giving Spirit which resides in him . . . ; and which God has given him without measure.

I believe also that our Lord Jesus Christ, through this Spirit, has risen from the dead . . . ; and offered himself up to God as an innocent sacrifice . . . ; further, that because this Spirit was in him, he was anointed by God, and sent to bring the good news to the poor in spirit, to heal the broken-hearted, to liberate the captives, and give sight to the blind (in intellect), to announce the joyful year of the Lord . . . ; I believe further that, as regards the purpose of his coming into the world, he was born, and came into the world, to be a witness to the Truth . . . , that he is God's Reason or Intellect, and moreover that he makes holy . . . , makes free . . . , and brings to God.

[I believe that he came into the world] to announce a light to the Jews (to whom God had revealed his will as a law and by letters written on tablets) . . . and to the pagans . . . , the light of truth and of reason, in which God's will became known most perfectly, as he himself knew it; to seek and make holy . . . what was lost . . . , so that the world would be preserved through him . . . , and he would bring men to God . . . ; to take away our sins, and disrupt the works of the devil, that is, to bring it about that we no longer sin, and that the old man, with his works, is dead in us . . . ; so that he would release those who were under the law and they would be adopted as children.

51. From Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, 12–24.

52. From Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, 26–48.

I believe also that God's Son, or the holy and life-giving Spirit which dwelled in our Lord Jesus Christ . . . was begotten from eternity out of God's essence . . . ; that in the beginning of all things he was with God, and was God . . . ; that he is the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creatures . . . ; and as regards his nature or essence, he is God's reason or his intellect . . . his eternal wisdom . . . the truth . . . the true light . . . which coming into the world enlightens each man. . .

[§3] Of the duties of men for salvation⁵³

I believe that the whole Christian religion, or everything men are obliged to do to obtain supreme blessedness, is contained in the two commandments of the law: (1) you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind; (2) you shall love your neighbor as yourself . . . [I believe] that rebirth is included in the love of God . . . and that all those who love God and their neighbors in this way will be blessed . . . ; and furthermore, that the law is perfect, as far as the commandments are concerned, the two mentioned being the greatest of them, and all the others being contained in them . . . and that our Savior came into the world to fulfill them . . . that is, to bring it about that men should do and observe what the Law commands.

I believe also that those who love, not God, but the world, and the things in it (that is, vainglory, pleasures, riches, etc.), who hate their neighbors, lie, deceive, or offend in some other way, who live in injustice, greed, idolatry, feasting, drunkenness, whoring, and other vices, will be punished with the most severe punishment . . . [I believe] that they cannot inherit God's kingdom . . . nor see his majesty, unless they convert. . .

[§4] On the origin of sins⁵⁴

I believe that men don't love God and their neighbors because they don't know God. . . . That the love of God arises only from knowledge of God, and that no one can love God who does not know him is so clearly evident in itself, that those who deny this should be considered irrational. . . .

Further, [I believe] that men are drawn away from the good, and toward the evil, or tempted to commit sinful acts . . . through desires which do not come from the mind or from the intellect, and are contrary to God's law . . . , desires . . . of which anger, vengeance, the desire for glory, feasting, drunkenness, greed, unchastity or lewdness, are not the least) . . . , and that the evil in the world comes from these desires. . .

53. From Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, 50–58.

54. From Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, 60–64.

[§5] Of men's depravity and rebirth⁵⁵

I believe that all men are born without a saving knowledge . . . and further, that they are all, by nature, children of anger, or subject to passions of hate, envy, anger, vengeance, love of glory, greed, etc. . . . and that therefore no one can come into God's kingdom unless he has been born again through the Spirit. . . .

The nature of men who have not been reborn (that is, of men as they are naturally born), considered in itself, is neither evil nor corrupted—as some Christians believe, and claim that we must believe—because in such a condition man, no less than any other thing, has been produced by God, and God cannot create what is evil or corrupted, since this is inconsistent with his goodness and perfection. . . .

That our first Ancestors, Adam and Eve, before their fall and transgression, were moved, like natural Man, by desires contrary to God's law, and contrary to the counsel of the Spirit, and unlike those who have been born again, who have acquired control over their desires, is evident from the story of their fall and transgression. . . .

[§6] On justification and salvation⁵⁶

I believe that those who are under the law and guided by the law are still in the darkness of ignorance (as far as what must be known for salvation is concerned) . . . subject to sin, or the passions of hate, envy, anger, vengeance, love of glory, greed, etc. . . . further, that through the law they cannot fulfill the requirements of the law, or do what the law requires . . . and that therefore no man can be justified through the law, or by the works of the law. . . .

I believe that what is impossible through the law, and can in no way be done or achieved through the law, can be brought about and achieved through God's Son (the eternal wisdom and truth) . . . and that God's son, insofar as he is in us, and we are in him . . . powerfully and really does in us . . . the willing and acting which are pleasing to God and good.

And that truly free willing and free acting are the rebirth and renewal of the spirit . . . ; the love toward God and toward one's neighbor which the law requires of us and in which all the commandments are included . . . [are] our redemption and liberation . . . , justification . . . , sanctification . . . , life-giving (that is, spiritual and eternal) . . . , that [our Savior] is the resurrection and the life . . . , the spirit . . . , the Word or

55. From Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, 66–70.

56. From Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, 72–124.

the Reason of life . . . , and the supreme salvation. The reason which in the beginning was with God, and was God. . . .

I believe also that God's Son, the eternal wisdom of God, the truth, etc., is the Savior of the whole world . . . that salvation is in him alone and that no other name is given to men though which they are saved . . . that through him we are able to do everything required for salvation . . . , and without him we can do nothing which concerns our salvation . . . ; that through him we receive forgiveness of sins . . . ; are reconciled with God . . . , freed from sin and made pure and holy by him . . . , blessed with all spiritual and heavenly blessings . . . , and assured that we are children of God . . . ; finally, that through him we are united with one another and with Christ, as Christ is one with God. . . .⁵⁷

[Spruit, 226]

I trust that with this I've done more than you expected and that you'll therefore consider yourself satisfied with what you asked of me. In return I ask only that you please consider what I've said carefully and with circumspection, and then judge what there is in the reports people have given you about my opinions in religion.

If you come across anything in this which might seem false or contrary to Holy Scripture, I ask you to tell me, and also to tell me the reason why it seems so to you, so that I can examine it. Those who consider something to be contrary to Holy Scripture and false if they find it does not agree with their Formularies or Professions of Faith will doubtless judge that much of what is in my letter is of that kind. But I am confident that those who test it according to the truth—which I have shown previously here is the only unmistakable rule or touchstone of truth and falsity, of orthodoxy and unorthodoxy—will judge differently about this, as I expect you to do also.

Here, then, you have my opinion, as far as the Christian Religion is concerned, and with it the proofs and arguments on which it rests. It remains now for you to judge whether those who build on such a foundation, and try to live according to such knowledge, are Christians or not, and what truth there is in the reports some have given you about my opinions.

57. At this point—a little over halfway through his text [Jelles/Spruit 1684/2004, 124]—Jelles concludes his *Profession*, and begins a long discussion divided into four sections: I. An affirmation of the orthodoxy of his Profession; II. On the meaning and interpretation of Holy Scripture, with a refutation of the Catholic position on this subject; III. What the saving faith in Christ really is, and how justification, sanctification, liberation, etc., are consequences of it; and IV. On the saving grace of Christ Jesus, and on its irresistible power. I omit these sections of the work and proceed to his concluding paragraphs.

LETTER 48B

'Spruit, 228] In closing, then, I ask now on my part that you weigh all this carefully and calmly, wish you enlightened eyes of the intellect, and conclude with the assurance that I am, etc.

Your devoted friend,
Jarig Jelles
[Amsterdam, early 1673?]⁵⁸

LETTER 48B

THREE REPORTS OF SPINOZA'S REPLY
TO THE PRECEDING LETTER

[1] [Jan Rieuwertsz the elder] And although some, who misunderstood [Jelles's] meaning, ascribed a strange opinion to him, nevertheless he considered this more worthy of pity than of anger.⁵⁹ So he proceeded continually to penetrate more and more into the Love and knowledge of God. In this he grew so much that one finds few men who have risen to such a high level of *spiritual Understanding*. That slander was the reason why he sent this Profession to a certain Friend living outside the City, so that he would judge from it whether his opinion agreed with the truth of the matter. His Friend sent this Profession back to him with these words: *I have read over your Writing with pleasure, and found it to be such that I can change nothing in it.*

[2] [Pierre Bayle] [§1] I have just learned a rather curious thing: after [Spinoza] renounced the profession of Judaism, he openly professed the Gospel and frequented the assemblies of the Mennonites or those of the Arminians in Amsterdam.⁶⁰ He even approved a profession of faith that one of his close friends communicated to him. . . .

[§2] When a certain Jarig Jellis [*sic*], his close friend, was suspected of various heterodoxies, he believed that to justify himself he ought to publish a profession of his faith. Having prepared it, he sent it to Spinoza and asked him to give him his opinion of it. Spinoza replied that he had read it with pleasure and that he had found nothing in it where he [AHW, 307] could make changes. *Sir, and Most Distinguished friend: I have read over the writing you sent me with pleasure, and I have*

58. According to Dr. Hallman's report, Spinoza replied to Jelles's letter on 19 April 1673. So it seems a reasonable guess that Spinoza received his letter early in that year.

59. On the provenance of these reports, see the Editorial Preface, pp. 371–72.

60. This is rather surprising, since Bayle usually identifies Spinoza as an atheist, e.g., in the first paragraph of his *Dictionary* article on Spinoza, with elaboration in Remark A (Bayle 2001, 525, 531). But then in Remark I, he quotes Kortholt as reporting that Spinoza declared himself to be a Christian, that he attended Reformed or Lutheran services, and that he often encouraged others to do the same.

*found it such that I could not change anything in it.*⁶¹ This profession of faith is in Dutch and was printed in 1684.

[3] [Dr. Hallman] More letters were found than they printed. But they were of no importance. That's why they were burned. There was one letter, however, which he [Jan Rieuwertsz the younger] had preserved, which was upstairs, among his things. Finally I persuaded him to get it and show it to me. It was on a half sheet, quite short, and written in Dutch. The date was 19 April 1673, from The Hague, and the letter was addressed to Jarig Jelles, who had sent him his *Profession of a universal Christian faith* and asked his judgment about it.

In this reply Spinoza did not give him any praises, or even much approval, but told him only that he could raise one question about it. For when he claimed on p. 5⁶² of the manuscript that man is inclined by nature to evil, but through God's grace and the spirit of Christ becomes indifferent to evil and good, this was contradictory, because he who has the spirit of Christ in this way, must necessarily be impelled only to the good.

Otherwise, Spinoza referred in this letter to Mr. Kerckring,⁶³ a Doctor, whom he had given an assignment in anatomy. At the end of the letter he wrote this to Jelles: "I shall send you the *Known Truth*⁶⁴ as soon as

61. The italicized words are in Latin (and in italics) in what is otherwise a French context. Essentially they translate into Latin the French Bayle has just used to report Spinoza's view. This gives the impression that the Latin provides the source, in Spinoza's letter, of the French just quoted. But any letter Spinoza wrote to Jelles would have been in Dutch, not Latin.

62. Wolf 1966 noted that no statement like the one here criticized appeared in the printed text of Jelles's *Profession*, and conjectured that Jelles subsequently omitted that statement in response to Spinoza's objection. AHW (490) agree that Jelles probably modified what he had said, but also suggest that Hallman may have meant to refer, not to p. 5 of the manuscript but to what is §5 in the printed *Profession*, where Jelles discusses man's corruption, though not in a way which might have prompted Spinoza's comment.

Another possibility which deserves consideration is that the version of Jelles's *Profession* Spinoza saw in 1673 was much shorter than the published version. We have no way of knowing how much the original letter may have changed in the ten years between Jelles's sending it to Spinoza and his death. But if the scriptural quotations justifying his positions were a later addition, then the document he sent Spinoza in 1673 would have been much shorter than the one published in 1684, and his discussion of human corruption might have occurred much earlier, perhaps as early as p. 5 of the manuscript.

63. Dirck (or Theodor) Kerckring (1639–1693) studied Latin with Spinoza's teacher, Van den Enden, and medicine at the University of Leiden, around the time Spinoza was in Rijnsburg. In 1671 he married Clara Maria van den Enden. According to Colerus, Spinoza competed with Kerckring for Clara Maria's hand, though many are skeptical of this. Clara was only thirteen when Spinoza was twenty-five, perhaps a bit young to marry even in those days. Cf. Nadler 1999, 108–9. Kerckring used lenses ground by Spinoza in his microscopes, and Spinoza possessed two of the books which resulted from his medical research.

64. Apparently this was the title of a book, but nothing seems to be known about it.

LETTER 49, TO GRAEVIUS

Mr. Vallon” (who, Rieuwertsz assured me, was a special friend of Spinoza’s, and who subsequently became a professor in Leiden) “returns my copy to me.”⁶⁵ However, if he should delay too long with it, he would arrange for Mr. Bronckhorst⁶⁶ to get him a copy. The conclusion was: that he remains, with cordial greetings, his devoted servant, B. Spinoza.

[IV/238]

LETTER 49 (A)
TO
THE MOST DISTINGUISHED
MR. JOHANNES GEORGE GRAEVIUS
FROM B. D. S.

5 Most Distinguished Sir,

I ask you to send me, as soon as you can, that Letter concerning Descartes’ death,⁶⁷ which I believe you copied long ago. For Mr. de V.⁶⁸ has asked me for it several times. If it were mine, I would not be in any hurry. Farewell, most esteemed sir, and remember your friend, who is,

10

Yours with all affection and fondness,

Benedictus despinoza

The Hague, 14 December 1673

Mr. Johannes George Graevius

Ordinary Professor of Rhetoric

At Utrecht

[Hague night post]

65. Mertens has identified “Mr. Vallon” as Dr. Jacob Vallan (1637–1740), who studied philosophy at Leiden, and received a medical degree there in 1658. He practiced medicine in Amsterdam, and with Lodewijk Meyer was a director of the City Theater in Amsterdam in the late 1660s. It is thought that he came to know Spinoza either through Meyer or Johannes Bouwmeester, who also studied medicine at Leiden around the same time. In 1675 he became a professor of anatomy at Leiden. See Mertens 2011.

66. Apparently Hendrik van Bronckhorst, a Cartesian and a doctor, who wrote the poem praising Spinoza which was used at the beginning of the Dutch translation of his exposition of Descartes.

67. The letter concerning Descartes’ death was apparently written by Johannes a Wullen, an Amsterdam doctor living in Sweden, to W. Piso, a doctor in Amsterdam, on 1 February 1650. According to Wolf, Wullen alleged that Descartes was “wholly to blame for his death, because he did not consult a doctor when he first became ill, and would not accept Wullen’s services when, at the request of the Queen of Sweden, he visited Descartes and offered to treat him. To crown it all, Descartes resorted to excessive blood-letting when he was too weak, in consequence of having taken no nourishment for several days” (Wolf 1966, 445).

68. We don’t know who “Mr. de V” was, but speculation has focused on Burchard de Volder.

[IV/238]

LETTER 50 (NS)
TO
THE MOST WORTHY AND WISE
MR. JARIG JELLES
FROM B. D. S.

[IV/239b] [Dear Friend],⁶⁹

20 As far as Politics is concerned, the difference you ask about, between Hobbes and me, is this: I always preserve natural Right unimpaired, and I maintain that in each State⁷⁰ the Supreme Magistrate has no more right over its subjects than it has greater power over them. This is always the case in the state of Nature.

25 Next, regarding the demonstration I establish in the Appendix of the Geometric demonstrations of Descartes' *Principles*, namely that God can only very improperly be called one or unique, I reply that a thing is said to be one or unique only in relation to its existence, but not to
30 its essence. For we don't conceive things under numbers unless they have first been brought under a common genus.

For example, someone who holds a penny and a dollar in his hand will not think of the number two unless he can call the penny and the dollar by one and the same name, either "coin" or "piece of money."

[IV/240b] For then he can say that he has two coins or two pieces of money, since he calls not only the penny, but also the dollar, by the name "coin" or "piece of money."

20 From this it's evident that nothing is called one or unique unless another thing has been conceived which (as they say) agrees with it. But since the existence of God is his essence, and we can't form a universal idea concerning his essence, it's certain that someone who calls God one or unique does not have a true idea of God, or is speaking
25 improperly about him.

As for shape being a negation, and not something positive, it's manifest that matter as a whole, considered without limitation, can have no shape, and that shape pertains only to finite and determinate bodies.
30 For whoever says that he conceives⁷¹ a shape indicates nothing by this

69. The OP has a more formal greeting, which might be translated "Most Esteemed Sir."

70. NS: *Stat* (= modern *Stad* = city). So OP: *Urbs*. AHW note that Spinoza probably meant to write *Staat* (= *Civitas* = state). This is probably evidence that Spinoza did not do the Latin translation himself.

71. NS: *bevat*. OP: *percipere*, perceives. But when *bevat* recurs at IV/240/32, the OP translates it: *concupere*.

except that he conceives a determinate thing, and how it is determinate. So this determination does not pertain to the thing according to its being, but on the contrary, it is its non-being. Therefore, because the shape is nothing but a determination, and a determination is a negation, as they say, it can't be anything but a negation.

[IV/241b] I've seen in a Bookseller's window the book the Utrecht Professor⁷² wrote against mine, which was published after his death. From the few things I read at that time, I decided it was not worth reading, much
15 less answering. So I left the book lying there, along with its author. I smiled to myself that the most ignorant are generally the boldest and the readiest to write. It seems to me that the . . .⁷³ offer their wares for sale in the same way Shopkeepers do, who always show the worst goods
20 first. They say the Devil is a very cunning fellow. But to me it seems that their mind far surpasses his in craftiness. Fare well.

The Hague, 2 June 1674⁷⁴

[IV/241]

LETTER 51 (NS)

TO

THE MOST ACUTE PHILOSOPHER

B. D. S.

FROM HUGO BOXEL

Sir,

[IV/242] The reason I'm writing you this letter is that I'd like to know your opinion about apparitions and specters or ghosts⁷⁵, and if there are any, what you think about them, and how long they live. Some think they're immortal; others that they're mortal. I doubt whether you grant that they exist at all, so I won't proceed further [with questions about their nature].

But it's certain that the Ancients believed in them. Modern Theologians and Philosophers still believe such creatures exist, though they don't agree about their essence. Some say they're made of a very thin,

72. The Utrecht professor was Reinier van Mansvelt (1639–1671), a Cartesian whose *Adversus anonymum theologo-politicum liber singularis* was published in Amsterdam in 1674. In spite of what Spinoza says about not buying his book, a copy was found in his library after his death. Perhaps someone gave it to him.

73. Both the OP and the NS have a series of dots here, indicating an omission. AHW suggest "professors" or "booksellers" as possible ways of filling in the blank.

74. The NS have "2 May 1671," which can't be right, given the mention of Van Mansvelt's book. The OP has 2 June 1674, which AHW accept.

75. NS: *verschijningen en nachtgeesten, of spoken*. OP: *apparitionibus, & Spectris, vel Lemuribus*. Neither Boxel, nor Spinoza, nor whoever translated their correspondence into Latin, seems able to settle on a stable terminology to refer to these supposed creatures. So I give both the Dutch and the Latin in my notes.

fine matter; others that they're spiritual. But (as I have already begun to say) we disagree greatly with one another, because I doubt whether
 10 you grant that they exist—although as you know, there are so many examples and stories in all Antiquity that it would really be hard to deny them or call them in doubt.

One thing is certain: if you acknowledge that they exist, you still don't believe that some of them are the souls of the dead,⁷⁶ as the Catholics
 15 profess. Here I shall stop, and await your reply. I say nothing about the war, nothing about the rumors, because these are the times we are living through . . . , etc. Farewell,

14 September 1674

[IV/242]

LETTER 52 (NS)

To

THE MOST ESTEEMED AND WISE

HUGO BOXEL

FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Sir,

Yesterday I received your letter, which was very welcome to me, as much
 30 because I wanted to hear some news from you as because I see that you
 [IV/243b] have not completely forgotten me. Some, perhaps, would consider it an evil omen that the reason for your writing to me was specters or spirits.⁷⁷
 But I find in this something more important, because I think that not only
 20 true things, but even trifles and imaginations, can be to my advantage.

But let's set to one side the question whether there are specters, phantasms, and imaginations,⁷⁸ because you find it extraordinary, not only to deny that there are such things, but even to doubt them—convinced as you are by the great number of stories told about them, both
 25 by the ancients and the moderns. The great respect I've always had for you, and still have, does not permit me to contradict you, much less to flatter you. The middle course I'll take is to ask that of the many

76. Here I follow the OP. The NS reads: *zo gy niet ontkent dat zy'er zijn, gy ook niet geloof dat enigen van de zelfden zielen van gestorve menschen zijn*, which would be translated: "if you don't deny that they exist, you also don't believe that some of them are souls of dead men."

77. NS: *nachtsproken, of geesten*. OP: . . . *vel Lemures*. It appears that a word has been omitted in the OP.

78. NS: *nachtspoken, grillen, en inbeeldingen*. OP: *Spectra, phantasmata, ac imaginationes*.

30 stories you've read about ghosts,⁷⁹ you choose, please, one or two which are least subject to doubt, and which most clearly prove that there are specters.⁸⁰ For to speak frankly, I've never read one credible Author who showed clearly that they exist. To this day I don't know what they are, and no one has ever been able to tell me.

[IV/244b] It's certain, however, that in the case of a thing experience has shown us so clearly, we must know what it is. Otherwise it will be very hard to conclude from some story that there are specters.⁸¹ What we should rather infer is that there is something, but that no one knows what it is.
20 If the Philosophers want to call those things we don't know "specters," I won't be able to deny them that, because there are infinite things of which I have no knowledge.

Finally, Sir, before I explain myself further in this matter, I ask you to tell me what sort of things these specters or spirits⁸² are. Are they
25 children, fools, or madmen? Because from what I've heard about them, their actions seem to be those of the brainless, rather than of intelligent men. To interpret them as favorably as possible, they are like nothing more than children's games or the pastimes of fools.

To make an end of this, I'll mention one more thing: the desire
30 people commonly have to tell things, not as they are, but as they want them to be. We find this more in stories of spirits and ghosts⁸³ than in other cases. The main reason for this, I believe, is that stories of this
[IV/245b] kind have no other witnesses than the people telling them. So, their inventors can, at their pleasure, add or omit details as seems best to them, without needing to fear that anyone will contradict them. [They
15 invent these things]⁸⁴ especially to justify the fear which has seized them about their dreams and phantasms, but also to strengthen their boldness, faith and opinion.

Besides this I have found still other reasons which move me to doubt, if not the stories themselves, then at least the details with which
20 they're told, details which are most useful to the conclusion people try to draw from these stories.

I'll stop here, until I understand which stories have so convinced you that you think it's absurd even to doubt them.

[The Hague, 16–20 September 1674]⁸⁵

79. NS: *spoken*. OP: *Spectris*.

80. NS: *nachtsproken*. OP: *Spectra*.

81. NS: *spoken*. OP: *Spectra*.

82. NS: *spooken, of geesten*. OP: *Spectra vel Spiritus*.

83. NS: *geesten en nachtsproken*. OP: *Lemuribus, Spectrisque*.

84. Added from the OP version of the letter.

85. No date in the OP or NS. AHW suggest these dates.

LETTER 53 (C)
TO
THE MOST ACUTE PHILOSOPHER
B. D. S.
FROM HUGO BOXEL

Reply to the Preceding

Sir,

[IV/246b] I expected no other answer than the one you have sent me, that is, from a friend, and from one who has different opinions. But that difference doesn't matter, for friends can disagree about indifferent matters, which *has always been permitted without harm to the friendship*.⁸⁶

20 You want me to say, before you explain yourself, what sort of things ghosts are, whether they are children, fools, or madmen, etc., and [OP: you add] that everything you have heard about them seems to proceed more from fools than from intelligent men. The old saying is true: a preconceived opinion hinders the investigation of the truth.

25 I say, then, that I believe that there are spirits, for these reasons:

(1) because it makes for the beauty and perfection of the universe that they exist;

(2) that it is probable that the Creator has created them because they are more like him than corporeal creatures are; and

30 (3) that as there is a body without a spirit, there must also be a spirit without a body. Finally,

(4) that I think that there is no dark body⁸⁷ in the upper air, place or space, which does not have its inhabitants, and consequently, that the immeasurable space between us and the stars is not empty, but full of inhabitants, which are spirits. The highest and uppermost are true spirits;

[IV/247b] the lowest, in the nearest air, are possibly creatures of a very fine and thin substance, and also invisible.

20 So I think there are spirits of every kind, except that possibly there are no female spirits.

This reasoning will not convince those who think mistakenly that the world has been made by chance. Apart from these reasons, daily experience shows that there are spirits, of which there are many stories, both ancient and modern, and even nowadays. These stories are told

86. The italicized phrase is in Latin in an otherwise Dutch context.

87. By this I take it Boxel means no heavenly body which is not a source of light, but (like the planets and their satellites) shines only with reflected light.

25 by Plutarch in his Treatise on famous men, and in other parts of his works, by Suetonius in his *Lives of the Caesars*, by Wierius⁸⁸ in his books on ghosts, and also by Lavaterus,⁸⁹ who has treated at length of the matter, which he has drawn from all the writers. As also Cardanus,⁹⁰ so
 20 renowned for his learning, in the books on Subtlety and on Variety, and of his own life, where he shows his own experiences and those of the friends and relations to whom spirits appeared. Melanchthon,⁹¹ a lover of the truth and an intelligent man, and many others are witnesses of their own experiences.

[IV/248b] A burgermeister from Sc., a learned and wise man who is still alive,
 20 told me once that in his mother's brewery people heard things happening at night like what happened in the day time when they were brewing. He swore to me that this happened several times. I myself have had such things happen to me—and not only once—that I shall never forget. Because of that, and these reasons, I am convinced that there are spirits.

25 As for devils, who torment wretched men in this life [and afterward],⁹² that's another issue—as is everything which concerns witchcraft. I think the stories people tell about these things are fables.

Sir, in the Treatises on Spirits you will find an abundance of details.
 30 In addition, if you please, you can also look at Pliny the younger, in bk. 7, in his letter to Sura, and Suetonius in the life of Julius Caesar, ch. 32. Valerius Maximus, bk. 1, ch. 8, §8 and again §7, of the *Dies geniales* of Alexander ab alexandro.⁹³ I think you have those authors at hand.

I am not speaking about Monks or Clerics, who tell of so many apparitions and visions of souls, spirits and devils, and tell so many
 [IV/249b] stories about ghosts—or to speak more accurately, fables—that they are boring and one loathes reading them. The Jesuit Thyraeus treats

88. Johannes Wierius (also called Weyer), a sixteenth-century Dutch physician, believed in the power of demons, but was skeptical of many of the stories about the occult. He opposed the persecution of witches, arguing that those accused of witchcraft were mentally ill. His *On Ghosts* (1577) was one of many books he wrote on this and related topics.

89. Ludwig Lavater was a sixteenth-century Swiss Reformed theologian whose work on ghosts (*De spectris, lemuribus et magnis atque insolitis fragoribus*, Leiden, 1569) was one of the most frequently printed demonological works of the early modern period.

90. Gerolamo Cardano, a sixteenth-century mathematician and astrologer, whose formulation of the elementary rules of probability made him a pioneer in the field. Wolf describes his *De Subtilitate Rerum* (1551) and *De Rerum Varietate* (1557) as attempts to explain natural phenomena in a way which was “highly creditable for that period” because of its commitment to the inviolability of the laws of nature.

91. Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), a leader of the Lutheran Reformation in Germany.

92. Here and elsewhere in the next few lines Gebhardt's version of the Dutch text has gaps which can be filled on the basis of the NS. The others are not as consequential as this one.

93. Alexander ab Alexandro (1461–1523) was an Italian jurist who published his *Dies Geniales* in 1522.

the same things in the book he calls *Apparitions of Spirits*.⁹⁴ But these
 20 people do this only for their own advantage, and to prove the existence
 of purgatory, a mine from which they extract so much silver and gold.
 One does not find this in the authors mentioned above and in others
 of the present day, who are beyond all partiality, and therefore, so much
 the more to be believed.

25 You say at the end of your letter that you cannot commend me
 to God without smiling.⁹⁵ But if you remember the conversation we
 previously had, you will see that one does not need to be frightened
 about the conclusion I then drew in my letter, etc.

30 As a reply to your letter,⁹⁶ where you speak of fools and lunatics, I
 place here the conclusion of the learned Lavaterus, with which he brings
 to an end his first book on spirits, which reads as follows: *whoever dares*
to reject so many agreeing witnesses, both ancient and modern, seems to me,
in my judgment, not deserving of belief when he affirms anything; as it is a
 [IV/250b] *mark of rashness to immediately believe all those who say they have seen ghosts,*
so it would also be great impudence to contradict so many credible Historians,
ancestors, and others of great authority rashly and without shame, etc.

21 September 1674

94. Petrus Thyraeus was a sixteenth-century German theologian who published his *De apparitionibus spirituum* in 1600.

95. This paragraph is crossed out in the copy and does not appear at all in either the OP or the NS. Neither the OP nor the NS versions of Letter 52 contain a passage in which Spinoza says he cannot commend Boxel to God without smiling. Probably Boxel had concluded Letter 51 by commending Spinoza to God, in a passage deleted by the editors, and as a result the editors also deleted the passage in Letter 52 in which Spinoza responded.

96. Wolf, perhaps misunderstanding Gebhardt's annotation, reported that this paragraph, like the one preceding it, did not appear in the OP, and the Hackett editors, perhaps following Wolf, made the same claim. But in fact it is there (and in the NS).

LETTER 54, TO BOXEL

[IV/250]

LETTER 54 (NS)
TO
THE MOST ESTEEMED AND WISE
MR. HUGO BOXEL
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Version

Sir,⁹⁷

Relying on what you say in your letter of the 21st of last month—that friends can disagree in indifferent matters, and still remain friends—I'll
20 say clearly what I think about the arguments and stories from which you conclude *that there are all kinds of spirits, but perhaps none of the feminine kind*.

The reason I haven't replied earlier is that I don't have at hand the books you cite, and so far haven't found any of them, except Pliny and Suetonius. But these two will spare me the trouble of looking for the
25 others, because I believe they all display the same extravagance: they love unusual tales and things which make men amazed and astonished. I confess that I myself was not a little astonished, not at the stories they tell, but at the people who tell them. I am amazed that men of intellect and judgment squander and abuse their eloquence to make us believe such trifles.

[IV/251] But let's leave the Authors and deal with the thing itself. First, I'll reason a bit about the conclusion you draw. Let's see whether I, who deny that there are ghosts or spirits, for that reason understand less
5 the Writers who've written about this or whether you, who maintain that there are such things, don't respect these Writers more than they deserve.

On the one hand, you don't doubt that there are spirits of the male gender; on the other, you doubt that there are spirits of the female gender. This seems to me to be more a whim than a doubt. For if this is your opinion, it would seem to me to be more like the imagination
10 of the common people, who suppose that God is male, not female. I'm surprised that those who've seen spirits naked have not cast their eyes on their genitalia. Perhaps they were afraid to do so; perhaps they didn't know about this difference.

97. The OP, as is typically the case, is more flowery: *Amplissime Vir*, (say) most distinguished sir.

You'll answer that this is mockery, not reasoning. By this I see that
 15 your reasons seem to you so powerful and well-founded that no one
 (at least in your judgment) can contradict them—unless he mistakenly
 thought that the world was made by chance. This obliges me, before
 I investigate the reasons you've given, to set out briefly my opinion
 regarding this proposition: that the world was made by chance.

20 I reply that, because *by chance* and *necessarily* are two contrary things,
 it's certain that someone who says the world was produced necessar-
 ily from the divine nature also denies completely that the world was
 made by chance. But someone who says that God could have refrained
 from creating the world maintains (though in other words) that this
 25 was done by chance, because it proceeded from a choice which could
 have not been made.

Because this opinion and judgment are completely absurd, people
 commonly grant that God's will is eternal, and has never been indif-
 ferent. Therefore, they must also necessarily grant (NB) that the world
 30 is a necessary effect of the divine nature. They may call this will,
 intellect, or whatever they want to. In the end, though, they arrive at
 this: they express one and the same thing in different words. For if
 someone asks them whether the divine will does not differ from the
 human will, they answer that the one has nothing in common with the
 other except the name. Besides, generally they grant that God's will,
 [IV/252] intellect, essence and nature are one and the same thing. I too, not to
 confuse the divine nature with the human, ascribe to God no human
 attributes, such as will, intellect, attention, hearing, etc. I say, then, as
 I said before: the world is a necessary effect of the divine nature, and
 5 was not made by chance.

This, I think, will be enough to persuade you that the opinion of
 those who say—if there are still some who say this—that the world
 has been made by chance is completely contrary to mine. On this sup-
 position I proceed to investigate the reasons from which you conclude
 10 that there are spirits of any kind whatever. What I can say about this
 in general is that they seem to be more conjectures than reasons. I
 can hardly believe that you take them for demonstrative arguments.
 But whether they are reasons or conjectures, let's see whether we can
 regard them as so well-founded.

15 Your first argument is that it pertains to the beauty and perfection
 of the Universe that spirits exist. Beauty, Sir, is not so much a quality
 of the object one sees as an effect of the object on him who sees it. If
 our eye was longer or shorter, or our constitution was different, the
 things we now consider beautiful would seem ugly, and those which
 20 are now ugly would seem beautiful to us. The most beautiful hand,

seen through a microscope, will look terrible. Some things, seen from a distance, are beautiful; when we see them close up, they are ugly. Moreover, things considered in themselves, or in relation to God, are neither beautiful nor ugly.

25 Whoever says that God has made the world beautiful must maintain one of these two things: namely, either that God made the world for the senses and eyes of men, or that he made the sense organs of men for the world. Now whether you maintain the one or the other, I don't see why God had to create ghosts or spirits to achieve one of these results.

30 Perfection and imperfection are terms which do not differ much from beauty and ugliness. To be brief, I ask, what more it contributes to the adornment and perfection of the world that there should be spirits, or all sorts of monsters, like Centaurs, Hydras, Harpies, Satyrs, [IV/253] Griffins, Argusses and more fancies of that kind? Certainly the world would have been well-adorned if God had decorated it as pleases our imagination and fitted it out with things which everyone easily imagines and dreams, but no one can ever understand.

5 Your second argument is that because spirits are more like God than the other, corporeal creatures, it is also probable that God created them. Truly, I confess I still don't know in what respect spirits are more like God than other creatures are. I know this: that there is no proportion between the finite and the infinite; so the difference between the 10 greatest, most excellent creature and God is the same as that between the least creature and God. This argument doesn't accomplish anything for your purposes.

If I had as clear an idea of spirits as I have of a triangle or a circle, I wouldn't hesitate to maintain that God created them. But because 15 the idea I have of them agrees completely with the ideas I find in my imagination of Harpies, Griffins, Hydras, etc., I can't consider them as anything other than dreams, which are as unlike God as being is unlike not-being.

Your third argument—that as there is a body without a spirit, so there 20 must also be a spirit without a body—seems to me no less insubstantial. Tell me, I ask you, whether it is not also probable that there are such things as memory, hearing, sight, etc., without bodies, because there are bodies without memory, hearing, sight, etc.? or that there is a sphere without a circle, because there is a circle without a sphere?

25 Your fourth and last argument [IV/246b/31–247b19] is the same as the first. So I refer you to my reply to that [IV/252/15–253/4]. Here I'll only note that I don't know what the high and low places are which you conceive in an infinite matter, unless you think that the earth is the center of the

Universe. For if the sun, or Saturn, is the center of the Universe, then the sun, or Saturn, will be the lowest place, not the earth.

30 Passing over this and the remaining arguments, then, I conclude that these arguments, and others like them, will not be able to persuade anyone that there are ghosts, or spirits of every kind, except those who, closing their ears to their intellect, let themselves be seduced by superstition, which is so hostile to reason that it would rather believe old wives' tales, only to diminish the notice taken of Philosophers.

[IV/254] As for the stories, I've already said in my first letter that I don't deny them completely; I deny only the conclusion drawn from them. Moreover, I don't consider them so credible as to prevent me from doubting many of the details they quite often add, more as an embellishment than for the truth of the story, or the better to conclude from
5 it what they wanted to conclude.

I'd hoped that out of so many stories you would have produced at least one or two which one could not in the least doubt, and which clearly showed that there are spirits or ghosts. That Mr. . . .⁹⁸ wanted
10 to conclude that they exist because he heard in his mother's brewery things happening at night like those he was used to hearing in the day—this seems to me ridiculous. It would take too long to investigate here all the stories written about these trifles. To be brief, I refer to Julius Caesar, who, as Suetonius witnesses, mocked such things, and
15 nevertheless was successful, according to what Suetonius reports about this Ruler (in his life of Caesar, ch. 59). In the same way anyone who weighs the effects of human imaginings and affects must also laugh at such things, whatever Lavaterus and others who have shared his dreams about this matter say against them.

[The Hague, October 1674]⁹⁹

98. Name omitted in NS. OP: *memoratus Consul*, the burgermeister you mentioned.

99. Neither the OP nor the NS gives a date, but this date can be inferred from the opening of the letter.

[IV/254]

LETTER 55 (NS)
TO
THE MOST ACUTE PHILOSOPHER
B. D. S.
FROM HUGO BOXEL

Reply to the Preceding

Sir,¹⁰⁰

I'm replying to your letter later than I intended to, because a slight illness has taken away my pleasure in studying and meditating, and prevented me from writing you. Now, thank God, I'm healthy again.

[IV/255] In my reply I'll follow in the footsteps of your letter but pass over your outcry against those who write about spirits.

I say, then, that I think there are no females among them, because I deny that they procreate. [I say nothing about]¹⁰¹ their shape and
5 composition, because this does not concern me.

Something is said to have been made by chance when it does not originate from the agent's intention. When someone digs up the ground to plant a vineyard, or make a well or a grave, and finds a treasure he never thought of, we say that this happened by chance.¹⁰² Someone who acts of his own free will, in such a way that he can either act or
10 not act, is never said to act by chance. For if that were so, men would always act by chance, which would be absurd. The necessary and the free are two contrary things; but not the necessary and what happens by chance. And though the divine will is eternal, it doesn't follow from
15 that that the world is eternal, because God was able to determine from eternity to make the world at a certain time.

You deny that the divine will has ever been indifferent, a position I reject. And it's not necessary to examine this as closely as you think.
20 Not all men say that God's will is necessary (for this involves necessity), because someone who ascribes a will to someone takes that to mean that he acts according to his will, and can refrain from acting. But if we ascribe necessity to him, then he cannot refrain from acting.

Finally, you say that you admit no human attributes in God, in order
25 not to confuse the divine nature with the human. So far, so good. For we cannot conceive in what way God acts, nor in what way he wills, understands, perceives, sees, hears, etc. But if you completely deny

100. OP: *Acutissime Vir*, Most Acute Sir.

101. From the OP.

102. Cf. Aristotle, 196b10–197a5, 1025a14–29.

these actions, and all our most lofty speculations about God, and say that they are not in God in an eminent and metaphysical way, then
 30 I don't know what sort of God you have, or what you understand by the word "God."

We must not deny what we don't grasp. The soul, which is a spirit, and incorporeal, can act only with the help of the most subtle bodies, namely, the humors. And what proportion is there between a body and a spirit? In what way does the soul act with the help of bodies? For
 [IV/256] without them it is at rest, and if they are agitated, then it acts contrary to what it ought to do. Show me how this happens. You can't. And I can't any more than you can. We see and feel, however, that the soul acts. This does not cease to be true, even though we don't grasp how this action happens.

5 Similarly, though we don't grasp how God acts, and we don't want to ascribe human acts to him, we must nevertheless not deny on that account that his actions agree in an eminent and inconceivable way with ours, as willing, understanding, with the intellect, but seeing and hearing without eyes or ears—as wind and air can destroy and eradicate
 10 landscapes and mountains without hands or other tools, which, however, is impossible for men without hands and tools.

If you ascribe necessity to God, and deprive him of will or free choice, one might ask oneself whether you aren't depicting him who is an infinitely perfect being as something monstrous. To achieve your
 15 purpose you'll need other arguments to provide you with a foundation for this, because in my judgment there's no certainty in the arguments you've proposed. And if you persist, there are still other arguments which perhaps will match yours. But let us leave that topic and proceed to others.

For a proof that there are spirits in the world, you want a demon-
 20 strative proof, of which there are very few in the world. Apart from those in Mathematics, there are none which are as certain as we would wish. In most cases we have probable conjectures, and are satisfied with this probability. If the arguments by which the things are proven were demonstrations, then the only men we would find to speak against them
 25 would be foolish and obstinate. But, dear friend, we are not so lucky. In this world we accept it as not so clear. To a certain extent we proceed by conjecture; and in our reasoning we accept the probable, for lack of demonstrations. This is evident in all the sciences, both divine and human, which are full of questions and disputes. Their multiplicity is
 30 the reason we also find so many differences of opinion among everyone.

For this reason there were once, as you know, Philosophers called *Skeptics*, who doubted everything. These *Skeptics* disputed for and

against, only to arrive, for lack of true reasons, at the probable; and each of them believed what seemed to him most like a proof. The moon is positioned directly under the sun. Therefore, the sun will become dark
 [IV/257] in a certain part of the earth. And if the sun does not become dark during the day, then the moon is not positioned directly under it. This is a demonstrative proof from the cause to the effect, and from the effect to the cause. There are some proofs of that kind, but very few,
 5 which no one can contradict, provided only that he understands them.

As for beauty, there are some things whose parts are proportional to the other parts, and are better in their composition than others, and God has given to the intellect and judgment of man an agreement and harmony with what is well-proportioned, and not with what has no
 10 proportion—as in harmonious and unharmonious sounds, in which the hearing can distinguish well the harmonious from the unharmonious, because the one causes pleasure and the other, irritation.

The perfection of a thing is also beautiful, insofar as nothing is lacking to it. There are many examples of this, which I omit, not to
 15 be tedious. Let us only look at the world, which is called a whole, or the Universe. If this is true, and it definitely is, then the world is not lacking in or deprived of incorporeal things.

What you say about Centaurs, Hydras, Harpies, etc., is irrelevant here, for we are speaking only about the most universal genera of things, and
 20 about their highest degrees, for example, about eternal and temporal, cause and effect, finite and infinite, souled and unsouled, substance and accident, corporeal and spiritual, etc., which comprehend under them countless and varied species.

I say that spirits are like God, because he is also a spirit. You require
 25 as clear an idea of spirits as you have of a triangle. This is impossible. Tell me, I beseech you, what idea you have of God, and whether, for your intellect, it is as clear as that of a triangle. I know that you don't, and have said before that we are not so fortunate that we grasp things through demonstrative proofs, and that for the most part the probable prevails in this world.

30 Nevertheless, I say that as there is a body without memory, etc., so there is also a memory, etc., without body, and that as there is a circle without a sphere, so there is a sphere without a circle. But this is also to leave the universal genera of things for the particular species, for which this reasoning is not intended.

I say that the sun is the center of the world and that the fixed stars are further from the earth than Saturn, and Saturn further than
 [IV/258] Jupiter, and Jupiter further than Mars, etc., so that in the endless air,

some things are further from, and others nearer to, us. We call these higher or lower, respectively.

It's not those who maintain that there are spirits who undermine
 5 the credibility of Philosophers, but those who deny them. For all
 the Philosophers, both ancient and those of our time, maintain that
 they're convinced there are. Plutarch is a witness of this in his *Treatise
 on the Opinions of the Philosophers*,¹⁰³ and *On Socrates' Spirit*.¹⁰⁴ Similarly,
 also all the Stoics, Pythagoreans, Platonists, Peripatetics, Empedocles,
 10 Maximus Tyrius, Apuleius, and others. Among Philosophers today, no
 one denies them. Reject, then, so many wise and intelligent eye- and
 ear-witnesses, so many Philosophers, and so many Historians, who
 relate these stories. Say that they, along with the common herd, are all
 fools and chumps. Your answers do not persuade anyone, but indeed
 are absurd, and generally do not touch the heart of our dispute. And
 15 you don't produce a single proof that establishes your opinion. Caesar
 does not mock spirits, but omens and foretellings. The same is true of
 Cicero and Cato. Nevertheless, if he had not mocked Spurina on the
 day he died,¹⁰⁵ his enemies would not have killed him with so many
 stabwounds. But enough of that for now, etc.

[October/November 1674]¹⁰⁶

[IV/258]

LETTER 56 (NS)

To

[MR. HUGO BOXEL]

FROM B. D. S.

Answer to the Preceding

Sir,

I hasten to answer your letter, which I received yesterday, because
 I fear that if I wait longer, I'll be forced to postpone my reply longer
 than I would like to. Your illness would have dismayed me, if I had not
 learned at the same time that you are better again. I hope that you are
 now completely recovered from it.

103. A work commonly known by its Latin title, *De placitis philosophorum*, and traditionally
 included in editions of Plutarch's *Moralia*, though now rejected as spurious.

104. *De genio Socratis*, in Plutarch, *Moralia* VII, 361–509 (LCL, 1984).

105. Spurina was the augur who warned Caesar to beware the ides of March. See Sue-
 tonius, "Life of Caesar," lxxxi.

106. Date suggested by AHW.

[IV/259] It would be evident just from this dispute we are now having—even if reason did not show it—how difficult it is for two people who follow different principles to be able to understand one another, and to agree, in a matter which depends on many other things.

Tell me, I beseech you, whether you have seen or read any Philosophers who think that the world was made by chance—in the sense, that is, in which you understand it, viz. that in creating the world God had one goal, and yet that he went completely outside the goal he had. I don't know anyone who ever had such a thought.

Similarly, I also don't know by what reasons you want to persuade me that *by chance* and *necessarily* are not contraries. As soon as I realize that the three angles of a triangle are necessarily equal to two right angles, I also deny that this happens by chance. Similarly, as soon as I find that heat is necessarily an effect of fire, I also deny that this happens by chance.

15 That *the necessary* and *the free* are two contraries seems no less extravagant and contrary to reason. For no one can deny that God knows himself and all other things freely; nevertheless everyone grants, by common agreement, that God cannot fail, or cease, to know himself. So it seems to me that you make no distinction between coercion, or force, and necessity. That a man wants to live, to love, etc., is not a coerced action. But it is necessary. Much more does God will to be, to know and to act [freely, but necessarily].

If, in addition, you reflect that indifference is only ignorance or doubt, and that a will which is always constant and determined in all things is a virtue and a necessary property of the intellect, you'll see that what I've said agrees completely with the truth. If people want to say that God could have failed to will a thing, but could not have failed to understand it, this is to attribute to God different freedoms, one necessary, the other indifferent. Thus they consider God's will to be different from his essence and from his intellect. So they fall from one absurdity to another.

The attention I required in my preceding letter seemed unnecessary to you. That's why you did not fix your thoughts on the main point, and why you neglected what was most relevant.

[IV/260] Next, you say that if I deny that the acts of seeing, hearing, attending, willing, etc., are in God—or that those things are in God in an eminent way—you don't know what kind of God I have. This makes me suspect that you believe there is no greater perfection than that which can be explained by the attributes mentioned. I don't wonder at this. I believe that if a triangle could speak, it would say in the same way that God is triangular in an eminent way, and that a circle would

say that in an eminent way the divine nature is circular. In the same manner, each being would ascribe its own attributes to God, and make itself like God. Everything else would seem deformed to it.

- 10 The brevity of a letter and limitations of time don't permit me to explain my opinion about the divine nature and answer the questions you raise. Besides, making objections is not the same thing as giving arguments. It's true that in this world we are feeling our way.¹⁰⁷ But it's
15 false that we act on the basis of conjectures in our speculations. In daily life, we must follow what is most probable, but in speculations we are required to follow the truth. Man would die of hunger and thirst if he weren't willing to eat or drink until he had a perfect proof that the food and drink would be good for him. But in speculation this is irrelevant.
20 On the contrary, we must beware of assuming as true something which is only probable. For once we have granted something false, infinite other false things follow from it.

Next, from the fact that the divine and human sciences are full of disputes and controversies, we can't conclude that everything treated in
25 them is uncertain. There are a great many people who are such lovers of contradiction that they have mocked geometrical demonstrations themselves. Sextus Empiricus and the other skeptics whom you mention say it is false that the whole is greater than its part,¹⁰⁸ and they judge similarly concerning the other axioms.

- 30 But leaving this to one side, and granting that when we lack a demonstration, we must be content with probabilities, I say that a probable proof must be such that, although we can have doubts about it, we cannot contradict it. For what can be contradicted is not probable, but improbable. For example, if I say that Peter is alive, because I saw him
[IV/261] in good health yesterday, that is indeed probable, in so far as no one can contradict me. But if someone else comes and says that yesterday he saw Peter pass out, and that he believes that afterward Peter died, this makes what I said seem false. That your conjecture concerning
5 ghosts and spirits seems false, and improbable, I have shown so clearly that I find nothing in your reply worth commenting on.

107. NS: *by de tast gaan*. OP: *multa ex conjectura facere*, doing many things on the basis of conjectures.

108. Sextus does not say quite this in any writing which has come down to us, and indeed, says the opposite in *Against the Physicists* I, 310. (See Akkerman in AHW, 494.) He does, however, use certain paradoxes about the nature of wholes and parts to deny that there are such things as wholes and parts (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism* III, 98–101; *Against the Physicists* I, 338–49). Spinoza may have thought that claim entailed a rejection of the geometric axiom. Or he may be citing Sextus from memory, and misremembering the passage. Sextus' works do not appear in our catalogue of the books in his library.

To your question, whether I have as clear an idea of God as I do of a triangle, I answer “yes.” But if you ask me whether I have as clear an image of God as I do of a triangle, I’ll answer “no.” For we can’t
 10 imagine God, but we can indeed understand him.

We should also note this here: I don’t say that I know God completely, but only that I know some of his attributes, not all of them, nor even most of them.¹⁰⁹ Certainly being ignorant of most of them
 15 does not prevent my knowing some. When I began to learn Euclid’s Elements, I understood first that the three angles of a triangle equal two right angles. I understood this property of the triangle clearly [NS: and distinctly], though I was ignorant of many other properties of the same triangle.

20 As for ghosts or spirits, I have not yet heard any intelligible property of theirs, but only imaginations which no one can grasp. When you say that ghosts or spirits here below—I follow your style, although I don’t know that matter here below is worth less than that above—consist of a very thin, rarefied and fine substance, you seem to be talking about
 25 spiders’ webs, air, or vapors. To say they’re invisible is to say what they are not, not what they are—unless perhaps you mean that they make themselves now visible, now invisible, as they please, and that the imagination will find no difficulty in these things, as also in other impossibilities.

30 To me the authority of Plato, Aristotle, and Socrates is not worth much. I would have been amazed if you had mentioned Epicurus, Democritus, Lucretius, or any of the Atomists, or defenders of invisible particles.¹¹⁰ But it’s no wonder that the people who invented occult qualities, intentional species, substantial forms, and a thousand other trifles
 [IV/262] contrived ghosts and spirits, and believed old wives’ tales, to lessen the authority of Democritus, whose good reputation they so envied that they had all his books burned,¹¹¹ which he had published with such great praise. If you’re willing to put your faith in them, what reason do you
 5 have for denying the miracles of the Virgin Mary and of all the Saints,

109. I take this to count strongly against interpretations of Spinoza’s metaphysics according to which he was not committed to there being more than two divine attributes. The most notable recent advocate of this view is Bennett 1985, 75–79.

110. NS: *iemant van d’Atomisten, of stellers van onzichtbare deeltjes*. OP: *aliquem ex Atomistis, atomorumque defensoribus*, one of the Atomists and defenders of atoms. Akkerman 1980, 55–56, conjectures that the NS gloss on *atomisten* is an editorial interpolation.

111. What Diogenes Laertius reports (on the authority of Aristoxenus—see his *Lives of the Philosophers* IX, 40) is that Plato *wanted* to burn all the writings of Democritus, but that two Pythagoreans prevented him, arguing that Democritus’s works were already too widely circulated for suppression to be feasible.

which so many famous philosophers, theologians, and historians have described that I can cite a hundred of the latter to one of the former.

Finally, Sir, I have gone on longer than I meant to. I don't want to trouble you further with these things, which I know you will not
10 grant, because you follow principles completely different from mine.

[The Hague, October/November 1674]¹¹²

LETTER 57 (OP)

TO

THE MOST EXCELLENT AND ACUTE PHILOSOPHER

B. D. S.

FROM EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS

Most Excellent Sir,

I'm surprised, at least,¹¹³ that by the very fact that Philosophers demonstrate that something is false, by the same reasoning they show its truth. At the beginning of his *Method*, Descartes thinks that the certainty of the intellect is equal in all men.¹¹⁴ Moreover, in his *Meditations*
20 he demonstrates [this]. They prove the same thing who think they can demonstrate something to be certain in this way: that it is accepted as indubitable by all men.

But setting these things to one side, I appeal to experience, and I humbly ask you to attend to these things carefully. For in this way it will be found that if one of two men affirms something, but the other denies it, and they speak in such a way that they are each aware of
25 [their apparent disagreement], although they seem to be contrary to one another verbally, nevertheless if their concepts are weighed, they both speak the truth (each one according to his concept).

I mention this because it is immensely useful in everyday life. Once
[IV/263] this one thing has been observed, countless disputes, and the quarrels stemming from them, can be prevented—although this truth in the concept is not always true absolutely, but only when those things are posited which are supposed in the intellect as true. This Rule is even
5 so universal that it is found among all men, madmen and dreamers not excepted. For whatever they say they are seeing (though it does

112. The date is suggested by AHW.

113. The OP does not explicitly indicate any omission of text, but “at least” suggests that some portion of Tschirnhaus's letter to Spinoza has been omitted (perhaps by Schuller, perhaps by the OP editors).

114. AT 1974–86, VI, 2: *La puissance de bien juger, et de distinguer le vraie avec le faux . . . est naturellement egale en tous les hommes.*

not appear this way to us) or say they have seen, it's quite certain that things really are this way.

This is also observed most clearly in the case at hand, concerning *Free Will*. For both those who argue for it and those who argue against it seem to me to speak the truth, that is, as each conceives Freedom. For Descartes calls Free what is not compelled by any cause. And you, on the other hand, call Free what is not determined to something by any cause. Therefore, I confess with you that in all things we are determined to something by a definite cause, and thus that we have no free will [as you understand "free will"]. On the other hand, I also think, with Descartes, that in certain things (as I shall show immediately) we are not in any way compelled, and so have free will [as he understands "free will"]. I shall take an example from the present situation.

The State of the Question is three-fold. *First*, do we have, absolutely, any 'power over things which are outside us? This is denied. For example, that I am now writing this letter is not absolutely in my 'power, since I certainly would have written earlier, if I had not been prevented either by being away or by the presence of friends. *Second*, when the will determines the motions of our body in a certain way, do we have 'power absolutely over those motions? I reply with a qualification: [we do] if we are living in a healthy body. For if I am healthy, I can always apply myself to writing or not. *Third*, when I have at my disposal the exercise of my reason, can I use it most freely, that is, absolutely? To this I reply "yes." For who would deny to me, without contradicting his own consciousness, that I can think, in my thoughts,¹¹⁵ either that I want to write, or that I want not to write. And as far as the action is concerned, because the external causes permit this (which concerns the second case), I indeed have the ability both to write and not to write.

I acknowledge, indeed, with you, that there are causes which determine me to write now, because you first wrote to me, and asked in [IV/264] the same letter that I write back at the first opportunity, and because there is an opportunity now, I would not like to lose it. I also affirm as certain, with my consciousness as a witness, and with Descartes, that such things do not on that account compel me, and that I really could, notwithstanding these reasons, refrain from doing this. This seems impossible to deny.

If we were compelled by external things, who could acquire the habit of virtue? On the contrary, if we affirmed this, all wickedness would

115. OP: *Quis enim mihi negaret . . . quod non possum in meis cogitationibus cogitare*. As various editors have observed, the OP has one negation too many.

be excusable. But in how many ways does it not happen that if we are determined to something by external things, we resist this with a firm
10 and constant heart?

So to give a clearer explanation of the above Rule: you are both speaking the truth according to your own conception. But if we look to the absolute truth, this agrees only with Descartes' opinion. For in your conception you suppose as certain that the essence of freedom consists
15 in this, that we are not determined by anything. If this is affirmed, both [opinions] will be true. But since the essence of each thing consists in that without which it cannot even be conceived, and freedom can certainly be conceived clearly, even though we're determined to something in our actions by external causes—*or* even though there are
20 always causes which are an inducement for us to direct our actions in such a way (even though they do not completely bring it about)—but by no means [can freedom be clearly conceived] if it's affirmed that we're compelled. See, in addition to this, Descartes' Vol. I, Letters 8 and 9, similarly, Vol. II, p. 4.¹¹⁶

But let this be enough. I ask you to respond to these difficulties
[NS adds: and you will find that I will not only be grateful, but also,
25 health permitting,

Your most devoted, N.N.]
8 October 1674

116. Tschirnhaus does not identify the edition of Descartes' correspondence he is using, but since he apparently did not know much French (Letter 70), he is unlikely to have used a French edition of the correspondence. There is a Latin edition which is a good candidate: Descartes 1668. In that edition Letters VIII and IX are the letters Descartes wrote to Elisabeth on 6 October and 3 November 1645 (AT 1974–86, IV, 304–17, 330–34). Each discusses free will. If this is right, that would make the third letter the one Descartes wrote to Renier for Pollot (the second letter in Part II of that edition, pp. 3–10, = AT 1974–86, II, 34–47).

[IV/265]

LETTER 58 (OP)
TO THE VERY LEARNED AND ABLE
MR. G. H. SCHULLER
FROM BENEDICT DE SPINOZA

Reply to the Preceding

Most Able Sir,

Our friend J. R.¹¹⁷ sent me the letter you were kind enough to write me, together with your friend's judgment concerning my opinion on free will and Descartes', which was most welcome to me. Although at
10 present I'm greatly distracted by other matters—not to mention the fact that my health is not too good—your singular kindness, and what I think most important, the zeal for the truth which possesses you compel me to satisfy your desire as well as the limits of my ability allow.

I don't know what your friend means before he appeals to experi-
15 ence and asks for careful attention. Then he adds: *if one of two men affirms something concerning some matter, but the other denies it*, etc., [and they speak in such a way that they are each aware of this, although they seem to be contrary to one another verbally, nevertheless if their concepts are weighed, they both speak the truth (each one according to his concept)].¹¹⁸ This is true, if he understands that the two men, though they use the same words, are nevertheless thinking about different things. Previously I sent some examples of this to our friend J.
20 R. I am writing him now, to ask him to communicate them to you.

So I pass to that definition of Freedom which he says is mine. But I don't know where he got it from. I say that a thing is free if it exists and acts solely from the necessity of its own nature, and compelled if it is determined by something else to exist and produce effects in a
25 fixed and determinate way.¹¹⁹ E.g., even though God exists necessarily, still he exists freely, because he exists from the necessity of his own nature alone. So God also understands himself, and absolutely all things, freely, because it follows solely from the necessity of his nature that he understands all things. You see, then, that I place freedom not in a
30 free decree, but in a free necessity.

117. Jan Rieuwerts (the elder), an Amsterdam bookseller, who published all of Spinoza's works and Glazemaker's translations of the works of Descartes. His shop was a meeting place where those who challenged received opinions could discuss their ideas. For further details, see Meinsma 1983 *passim*.

118. The bracketed material is supplied from Tschirnhaus's Letter 57, IV/262/22–27.

119. Spinoza's language is close, but not identical, to that in E I D7.

[IV/266] But let's examine created things, which are all determined by external causes to exist and to produce effects in a definite and determinate way. To clearly understand this, let's conceive something very simple. Suppose a stone receives, from an external cause which strikes against
 5 it, a certain quantity of motion, by which it afterward will necessarily continue to move, even though the impulse of the external cause ceases. This continuance of the stone in motion, then, is compelled, not because it is necessary, but because it must be defined by the impulse of the external cause. What I say here about the stone must be understood
 10 concerning any singular thing, however composite it is conceived to be, and however capable of doing many things: each thing is necessarily determined by some external cause to exist and produce effects in a fixed and determinate way.

Next, conceive now, if you will, that while the stone continues to move, it thinks, and knows that as far as it can, it strives to continue
 15 moving. Of course, since the stone is conscious only of its striving, and not at all indifferent, it will believe that it is very free, and that it perseveres in motion for no other cause than because it wills to. This is that famous human freedom everyone brags of having, which consists only in this: that men are conscious of their appetite and ignorant of
 20 the causes by which they are determined. So the infant believes that he freely wants the milk; the angry boy that he wants vengeance; and the timid, flight. Again, the drunk believes it is from a free decision of the mind that he says those things which afterward, when sober, he wishes he had not said. Similarly, the madman, the chatterbox, and a great many people of this kind believe that they act from a free deci-
 25 sion of the mind, and not that they are set in motion by an impulse.¹²⁰

And because this prejudice is innate in all men, they are not so easily freed of it. For though experience teaches quite abundantly that there is nothing less in man's power than to restrain his appetites, and that often, when men are torn by contrary affects, they see the better and
 30 follow the worse,¹²¹ they still believe themselves to be free, because they want certain things only slightly, so that their appetite for these things can easily be restrained by the memory of another thing they recall more frequently.

120. Cf. E II P35S, III P2S.

121. Another allusion to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VII, 20–21, which is thematic for Part IV of the *Ethics*. Euripides attributed a similar sentiment to the heroine of his *Medea* (1078–80), but the context was very different (not the decision to betray her father by helping Jason steal the golden fleece, but the later decision to avenge Jason's betrayal of her by killing their children). See AHW, 496.

With this, if I'm not mistaken, I've explained sufficiently what my opinion is concerning free and compelled necessity, and concerning that fictitious human freedom. From this it's easy to reply to your friend's
 [IV/267] objections. For when Descartes says that he is free who is compelled by no external cause,¹²² if he understands by a man who is compelled one who acts unwillingly, I grant that in certain things we are not at all compelled; in this respect we have free will. But if by compelled he
 5 understands one who acts necessarily, though not unwillingly, then (as I have explained above) I deny that we are free in anything.

But your Friend affirms, for his part, that *that we can use the exercise of our reason most freely—i.e., absolutely*.¹²³ He persists in this opinion with sufficient—not to say, too much—confidence. *For who*, he says,
 10 *would deny, except by contradicting his own consciousness, that I can think, in my thoughts, that I want to write, and that I do not want to write*. I'd really like to know what sort of consciousness he's talking about, if it's not what I've explained above in the example of the stone.

For my part, unless I contradict my consciousness, i.e., contradict reason and experience, and unless I encourage prejudices and ignorance,
 15 I deny that I can think, by any absolute power of thinking, that I will to write and do not will to write.

But I appeal to his consciousness. Doubtless he's experienced that in dreams he doesn't have the 'power to think that he wills to write and does not will to write—or that when he dreams that he wills to write, he has the 'power of not dreaming that he wills to write. I also
 20 don't believe that he's learned from experience that the mind is always equally capable of thinking of the same object. [Rather, I think he's learned from experience] that, as the body is more capable of having an image of this or that object stirred up in it, so the mind is more capable of contemplating this or that object.

Moreover, when he adds that the causes of his having applied his mind
 25 to writing have prompted him to write, but have not compelled him to, all that means (if you want to examine the matter fairly) is that his

122. This is not quite what Descartes says in the Fourth Meditation, where in the end he makes freedom consist, not in our ability to do either A or not-A, but in our *feeling* that we are *not* determined to do what we do by any external force—or, depending on the placement of the negation, in our *not feeling* (not being aware?) that we *are* determined by an external force. Cf. AT 1974–86, VII, 57–58. Spinoza's critique of Descartes in E II P35S seems to depend on the latter reading. But Descartes' letter to Elisabeth of 3 November 1645 seems to make freedom depend on our awareness of our independence (without, however, explaining how our independence is consistent with God's infinite power). For a helpful survey of the issues and texts, see Jayasekera 2014.

123. Cf. Letter 57, IV/263/27–31. Note that the superfluous negation in Tschirnhaus's letter is missing from Spinoza's paraphrase.

mind was then so constituted that causes which could not have caused him at another time to go in that direction (i.e., when he was torn by some great affect) could now easily do this. I.e., that the causes which
 30 could not compel him [then] to do otherwise have now compelled him, not to write unwillingly, but to necessarily have a desire to write.

As for what he has maintained next: *that if we were compelled by external causes, no one could acquire the habit of virtue*,¹²⁴ I don't know who has told him that it can't happen from a fatal necessity, but only from a free decision of the Mind, that we should have a firm and constant disposition.

[IV/268] As for what he adds next: *that if we affirmed this, all wickedness would be excusable*, what of it? For evil men are no less to be feared, nor are they any less harmful, when they are necessarily evil. But concerning these matters, please see my Appendix to books I and II of Descartes' *Principles*, demonstrated in Geometric order, Part II, Chapter VIII.
 5

Finally, I'd like your friend, who raises these objections against me, to tell me how he conceives the human virtue which arises from the free decree of the Mind to be consistent with God's preordination. If he confesses, with Descartes,¹²⁵ that he doesn't know how to reconcile
 10 these things, then he's trying to launch against me the same weapon which has pierced him. But it's no use. If you'll examine my position attentively, you'll see that everything in it is consistent, etc.

[The Hague, October 1674]¹²⁶

[IV/268]

LETTER 59 (OP)

TO THE MOST EXCELLENT AND ACUTE PHILOSOPHER, B. D. S.
 FROM EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS

Most Excellent Sir,

When shall we obtain your method¹²⁷ of rightly governing the reason in acquiring knowledge of unknown truths, along with General matters
 20 in Physics? I know that you have made great progress in these things. The first was already known to me, and the second may be learned

124. Cf. Letter 57, IV/264/6–7, quoted slightly freely.

125. Cf. Descartes, *Principles* I, 39–41. Also relevant is the Letter to Elisabeth of 6 October 1645 (AT 1974–86, IV, 314).

126. Date suggested by AHW.

127. It's clear from this letter that Spinoza had discussed with Tschirnhaus at least some of the content of the TdIE, and had led him to anticipate the publication of that work in some form. AHW (496) suggest that the rest of the letter shows a familiarity with the contents of TdIE 96ff.

from the Lemmas added to the second Part of the *Ethics*,¹²⁸ by which many difficulties in Physics are easily solved.

If you have the time and the opportunity, I humbly ask you for the true Definition of Motion and its explanation, and how, since extension,
 25 insofar as it is conceived through itself, is indivisible, immutable, etc., we can deduce a priori that so many things, in such great varieties, can arise, and consequently, the existence of the shape in the particles of a body, which [shapes] nevertheless vary in each body, and are different from the shapes of the parts which constitute the form of another body?

[IV/269] When I was with you, you indicated to me the method you use for finding truths not yet known. By experience I know that this Method is very excellent, and still very easy, as far as I have understood it. I can affirm that just by observing it, I have made great progress in Math-
 5 ematics. I would like, therefore, for you to give me the true definition of an adequate idea, of a true idea, of a false idea, of a fictitious idea and of a doubtful idea.

I have tried to discover the difference between a true idea and an adequate idea, but so far all I have learned is this: when I investigated a subject, and a certain concept or idea, to find out whether this true
 10 idea would also be an adequate idea of some thing, I asked myself what the cause of this idea or concept was. When I had found that, I asked again what the cause of this concept was. And so I proceeded, always seeking the causes of the causes of the ideas, until I found a cause of which I could not see any further cause, other than that, among all the
 15 possible ideas I have in me, this one also exists.

For example, if we're asking what the true origin of our Errors consists in, Descartes will reply that we give our assent to things we have not yet clearly perceived. But though this is a true idea of the thing, I will still not be able to determine everything it's necessary to know
 20 about it, unless I also have an adequate idea of the thing.¹²⁹ To achieve this I ask again about the cause of this concept: why it happens that we give our assent to things we don't clearly understand. I reply that this happens because we lack knowledge. But here it's not possible to ask again what the cause of our not knowing certain things is. And from
 25 that I see that I've uncovered an adequate idea of our errors.

Meanwhile, I ask you this: because it's established that many things expressed in infinite ways have an adequate idea of themselves, and that from any adequate idea anything which can be known about the

128. Evidently Tschirnhaus had also seen at least a partial draft of the *Ethics*. See the physical excursus after E II P13S, II/97/18–102/18.

129. Tschirnhaus apparently assumes that an adequate idea of a (created) thing will satisfy the requirements for a definition of a created thing, laid down in TdIE 96. Cf. II/35/10–28.

thing can be derived—though they may be elicited more easily from one idea than from another—is there a means of knowing which of
 30 two ideas must be used in preference to the other?

For example, an adequate idea of a circle consists in the equality of the radii, but it also consists in the infinite rectangles, equal to one another, which are made from the segments of two lines [intersecting within the circle].¹³⁰ So it has infinite further expressions, each of which explains the adequate nature of the circle. And though from each
 [IV/270] of these everything else which can be known about the circle can be deduced, still, it can be done much more easily from one of these than from the other. So anyone who considers the ordinates of curves will deduce many things which concern their measurement. But we'll do this more easily if we consider the Tangents, etc.¹³¹

5 In this way I wanted to indicate how far I've progressed in this Inquiry. I long for its completion—or if I've made a mistake somewhere, its correction—as well as the Definition I desire. Farewell.

5 January 1675

LETTER 60 (OP)

TO THE VERY NOBLE AND LEARNED
 EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS
 FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Most Noble Sir,

15 I don't recognize any difference between a true idea and an adequate one, except that the term "true" concerns only the agreement of the idea with its object, whereas the term "adequate" concerns the nature of the idea in itself. So really there's no difference between a true idea
 20 and an adequate one except for that extrinsic relation. To know which of the many ideas of a thing is sufficient for deducing all its properties,

130. This is a theorem in Euclid's *Elements*, Bk. III, Prop. 35, also referred to in E II P8S. If an adequate idea of a thing is one which provides a good definition of it, then on Spinoza's principles the idea of a circle as a geometric figure all of whose radii are equal will not be an adequate idea of a circle. Cf. TdIE §95.

131. The ordinates (or applicates) of a conic section are any of the chords perpendicular to, and bisected by, the axis of symmetry of the conic section. They can be used to measure the perimeter or area of a curve. But Tschirnhaus prefers an alternate method, involving the use of tangents. Wolf 1966, 456–57, has an elegant explanation of this.

I pay attention to one thing only: that the idea *or* definition of the thing expresses the efficient cause.

For example, in investigating the properties of a circle, I ask whether from the idea of a circle according to which it consists of infinite rect-
 25 angles, I could deduce all its properties. I ask, I say, whether this idea involves the efficient cause of the circle. Since it doesn't, I seek another: viz. that a circle is the space described by a line one end of which is fixed
 [IV/271] and the other moving. Since this Definition now expresses the efficient cause, I know I can deduce all the properties of the circle from it, etc.

Similarly, when I define God as a supremely perfect Being,¹³² since that definition doesn't express the efficient cause (for I understand
 5 the efficient cause to be both internal and external), I won't be able to derive all God's properties from it. But when I define God to be a *Being [absolutely infinite]*, etc. (see E I D6), [I can derive all God's properties from it]. As for the other things, concerning motion and Method, because they aren't yet written out in an orderly fashion, I
 10 reserve them for another occasion.

As regards your contention that he who considers the ordinates of Curves will deduce many things about their measurement, but that he'll do this more easily by considering the Tangents, etc., I think the contrary: that by considering the Tangents many other things will be
 15 deduced with greater difficulty than by considering the ordinates in sequence. And I maintain absolutely that from certain properties of a thing (whatever idea is given) some things can be discovered more easily, others with greater difficulty—though they all concern the Nature of the thing. But I think it necessary to pay attention to just this one
 20 thing: we should seek an idea from which all things can be elicited, as I said above. For if I want to deduce from a thing everything possible, it follows that the last things will be more difficult than the first, etc.

[The Hague, January 1675]¹³³

132. Though Descartes sometimes defines God by listing his attributes (e.g., at AT 1974–86, VII, 40, 45), his preferred definition is that God is a supremely perfect being (AT 1974–86, VII, 46, 162). In Curley 1986 I made a conjecture about the reasons for that preference. Perhaps Spinoza accepted this Cartesian definition in the *Short Treatise*. So AHW maintain, citing the note attached to KV I, ii, 1. I don't find this evidence compelling. But certainly by September 1661, in Letter 2, although Spinoza accepts the Cartesian formula as articulating what "we understand by God," the definition he chooses for his axiomatization is the one he was to adopt in the *Ethics*. Cf. IV/7/23–8/3. Letter 60 may explain why he made that choice.

133. Date suggested by AHW.

LETTER 61 (OP)

TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED MR. B. D. S.
FROM HENRY OLDENBURG

With Warmest Regards

The Very Learned Mr. Bourgeois, a Doctor of Medicine from Caen,
[IV/272] and an adherent of the Reformed Religion, is about to take a trip to
the Netherlands. This offers me a convenient opportunity I don't want
to miss: to let you know in this way that some weeks ago I sent you
thanks for your Treatise [the TTP], which you had sent me (though
5 it was never delivered). But I doubt whether my letter ever reached
you. *In it I indicated my opinion of that Treatise, which now, having subse-*
quently examined and weighed the matter more carefully, I certainly think
*was premature.*¹³⁴

At that time certain things seemed to me to tend to the detriment of
Religion, when I measured it by the standard provided by the common
10 herd of Theologians, and the accepted Formulas of the Confessions
(which seem to be too full of partisan zeal). But now, as I rethink the
whole matter more deeply, many things occur to me which persuade
me that you are so far from trying to harm true religion, or solid
philosophy, that on the contrary you are working to commend and
establish the authentic purpose of the Christian Religion, and indeed,
15 the divine sublimity and excellence of a fruitful Philosophy.

Since, therefore, I now believe that in your heart you have this
intention [to advance the cause of true Christianity], I should like to
ask you earnestly to be kind enough to explain what you are now pre-
paring and thinking about for that purpose, in frequent letters to your
old and honest Friend, who longs for the happiest outcome of such a
20 godly plan. I solemnly promise you that I will not divulge any of this
to any mortal, if you ask me not to. I shall only endeavor to gradu-
ally dispose the minds of good and wise Men to embrace those truths
you sometimes bring into a fuller light, and to abolish the prejudices
conceived against your Meditations.

25 If I'm not mistaken, you seem to see very deeply into the nature and
powers of the human Mind, and its Union with our Body. I earnestly
implore you to please teach me your thoughts on this theme.

134. Italicized in the OP, but not the NS. So this emphasis may be the work of
the OP editors, not a feature of the original letter, which has not been preserved.
On Oldenburg's change of heart regarding Spinoza, see Letter 63, IV/276a, and the
annotation there.

LETTER 62, FROM OLDENBURG

Farewell, Most Excellent Sir, and continue to be well-disposed to a Most Zealous Admirer of your Teaching and excellence,

Henry Oldenburg
London, 8 June 1675

[IV/273]

LETTER 62 (OP)

TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED MR. B. D. S.
FROM HENRY OLDENBURG

5 Now that Our Correspondence has been so happily resumed, Most Distinguished Sir, I don't want to fail in the duty of a friend by neglecting it. From the reply you gave me on 5 July,¹³⁵ I understand that you intend to publish that Five-part Treatise of yours [the *Ethics*]. Let me urge you, I beg you, from the sincerity of your affection toward me,
10 not to mix into it anything which might seem to any extent to weaken the practice of Religious virtue, especially since this degenerate and dissolute age chases after nothing more avidly than doctrines whose consequences seem to support the vices running riot among us.

As for other matters, I won't decline to receive copies of the Treatise
15 you mention. I should only like to ask this: that they be addressed, when the time comes, to a certain Dutch merchant living in London, who will make sure that they are passed on to me afterward. There'll be no need to mention that you have sent me books of this kind. Provided they come safely into my possession, I have no doubt that it will be convenient for me
20 to distribute them from here to my friends, and to get a just price for them.

Farewell, and when you have time, reply to

Your Most Devoted,
Henry Oldenburg
London, 22 July 1675

[IV/274a]

LETTER 63 (A)

TO THE MOST EXCELLENT AND ACUTE PHILOSOPHER,
B. D. S.
FROM G. H. SCHULLER

Most Noble and Excellent Sir,

I would blush for my long silence up to this point, for which I could be accused of not being grateful for the favor you, in Your Benevolence,

135. This letter has apparently not been preserved.

have shown me (who did not deserve it), if I did not think that in Your noble kindness You are inclined to excuse rather than to accuse, and
 10 if I did not know that that same kindness devotes itself, for the common Good of your Friends, to such serious meditations that it would be injurious and harmful to disturb them without a valid reason. That is why I have been silent, and was content in the meantime to learn from friends that You are in good health.

15 But now I write to let you know that our most noble friend, Mr. von Tschirnhaus, who is still in England, enjoys the same good health, and that he has asked me three times, in his letters to me, to send his regards and respectful greetings to you. He has also asked me repeatedly to propose a solution to the following doubts, and at the same time to ask for the reply we desire.¹³⁶

20 [First,] would you please, Sir, convince us by some probative
 [IV/275a] demonstration,¹³⁷ not by a reduction to impossibility, that We cannot know more attributes of God than thought and extension? Furthermore, does it follow from this that, in contrast to us, creatures consisting of those other attributes cannot conceive extension. In this way it would
 5 seem that there must be as many worlds established as there are attributes of God?¹³⁸ For example, our World of extension has, so to speak, a certain size.¹³⁹ Would there also be Worlds of the same size, consisting of other attributes, in which, as we perceive nothing besides extension (except thought), the creatures of those Worlds would have to perceive
 10 nothing but the attribute of their own World and thought?

Second, since God's intellect differs from our intellect both in Essence and in existence,¹⁴⁰ it will have nothing in common with our

136. The OP and NS omit these first two paragraphs, substituting for them the following sentence, which is also written on the original as an instruction to the printer: "I earnestly ask you to please resolve the doubts raised here and to send us your response to them."

137. Cf. Aristotle, *Prior Analytics* II, 14, 62b29–31, where "probative demonstrations" (which start from propositions admitted as true) are contrasted with demonstrations *per impossibile* (which seek to refute by reduction to a proposition admitted to be false).

138. Wolf (1966, 460) contended that this way of putting things involves "a grave misconception" of Spinoza's thought. But if Stolle-Hallman's travel journal may be trusted, Spinoza did sometimes express himself this way (AHW). That journal reports Spinoza as saying: "the world is eternal," but "there are many worlds" (Freudenthal 1899, 223; Gebhardt/Walther 1998, 128).

139. A: *amplitudinis*. OP: *extensionis*. I take it that the "size" of the different worlds which Tschirnhaus and Schuller are hypothesizing would be a question, not of their physical extent, since worlds other than that of extension have no extension—this is why Tschirnhaus and Schuller apologize for putting things the way they do—but of the number of their members. So if the other worlds have the same "size," that means there would be a one-to-one correspondence between members of one world and members of another. The OP's way of putting this seems infelicitous.

140. Cf. E I P17S (II/62/34ff).

intellect, and therefore, by I P3, God's intellect cannot be the cause of our intellect.

15 Third, in P10S you say that nothing in Nature is clearer than that each Being must be conceived under some attribute (which I see very well), and that the more reality or Being it has, the more attributes belong to it. From this it would seem to follow that there are Beings which have three, four, etc., attributes. Nevertheless, one could infer
20 from what has been demonstrated that each Being consists of only two attributes, namely, of some definite attribute of God and the idea of that attribute.

[IV/276a] Fourth, I would like Examples of the things produced immediately by God, and those produced by the mediation of some infinite modification. Thought and extension seem to me to be of the first kind; of the second kind, in thought, Intellect, and in extension, Motion, etc.¹⁴¹

5 These are the things our Tschirnhausen and I would like Your Excellence to clear up, if your time permits. For the rest he reports that Messrs. Boyle and Oldenburg had formed a strange conception of Your person. Not only has he disabused them of this conception, he
10 has also added reasons inducing them, not only to think most worthily and favorably again of your person, but also to value most highly the *Theological-Political Treatise*.¹⁴² In accordance with Your instructions,¹⁴³ I did not dare to inform You of this. Be assured that I am at your service in every way, and that I remain,

Most Noble Sir,

Your very devoted servant,

G. H. Schuller

Amsterdam, 25 July 1675

Mr. van Gent¹⁴⁴ sends you his greetings, as does J. Riew.

141. At this point Gebhardt attaches a note which reads: "The face of the whole of nature, which, though it varies in infinite ways, always remains the same. See II P13S." This note (a quotation from Letter 64) was written in the margins of the original letter, in the same hand which wrote the note at IV/274/21–22. But it was evidently not intended as an editorial instruction to the printer. (Pace the Hackett editors, it was not printed in the OP.) Oldenburg's language (*publico destinati*) does not imply that he thought the *Ethics* was intended for the general public, but just that he thought it intended for publication (as Glazemaker understood it, in the NS).

142. When did this conversation with Boyle and Oldenburg about the TTP occur? If it was before Oldenburg's letter of 8 June 1675, then Tschirnhaus may have played a role in changing Oldenburg's mind which Oldenburg's letter does not acknowledge. If it was after the letter, then the favorable opinion of Spinoza which Oldenburg expressed in that letter was not very stable.

143. It's unclear just what this direction was. Cf. Wolf 1966, AHW, Hackett.

144. Pieter van Gent was a friend of Schuller and Tschirnhaus, who copied out significant portions of Spinoza's works at Schuller's request, apparently preparing them for the printer. See Steenbakkers 1994, 35–50.

[IV/277]

LETTER 64 (OP)

TO THE VERY LEARNED AND ABLE MR. G. H. SCHULLER
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Most Able Sir,

I rejoice that finally the opportunity has presented itself for you to cheer me with one of your letters, which are always so welcome. I beg you to do this frequently, etc.

10 Now to the doubts. To the first I say that the human Mind can achieve knowledge only of the things which the idea of an actually existing body involves, or what can be inferred from this idea itself. For the power of each thing is defined solely by its essence (by E III P7). Furthermore, (by II P13) the essence of the Mind consists only
15 in this, that it is the idea of an actually existing Body. Therefore, the Mind's power of understanding extends only to those things which this idea of the Body contains in itself, or which follow from it. But this idea of the Body neither involves nor expresses any other attributes of God than Extension and Thought. For (by II P6) its object, that is,
20 the Body, has God for a cause insofar as he is considered under the attribute of Extension, and not insofar as he is considered under any other attribute. So (by I A6) this idea of the Body involves knowledge of God only insofar as he is considered under the attribute of Extension.

Next, this idea, insofar as it is a mode of thinking, also (by the same
25 Proposition)¹⁴⁵ has God for a cause insofar as he is a thinking thing, and not insofar as he is considered under another attribute. Therefore, (by the same Axiom) the idea of this idea involves the knowledge of God insofar as he is considered under Thought, but not insofar as he is considered under any other attribute.

It is evident, then, that the human Mind, *or* the idea of the human
[IV/278] Body, neither involves nor expresses any other attributes of God besides these two. Moreover no other attribute of God (by I P10) can be inferred or conceived from these two attributes, or from their affections. So I conclude that the human Mind cannot achieve knowledge of any other
5 attribute of God beyond these, as I proposed.

But you ask, in addition, whether this must not establish as many worlds as there are attributes? See E II P7S. Moreover, this Proposition could be demonstrated more easily by reducing the thing to an absurdity. Indeed, I usually prefer that kind of demonstration when

145. I.e., II P6.

10 the Proposition is negative, because it agrees better with the nature of such things.

But because you ask for a positive demonstration only, I pass to the second question, which is, whether one thing can be produced by another from which it differs, both in its essence and in its existence. For things which differ in this way from one another seem to have nothing in common. But since all singular things, except those produced
15 by their likes, differ from their causes, both in their essence and in their existence, I do not see any reason for doubt here.

Moreover, I believe I have already explained sufficiently in what sense I understand that God is the efficient cause both of the essence and of
20 the existence of things (in E I P25C&S). We form the axiom of I P10S from the idea we have of an absolutely infinite Being (as I indicated at the end of that Scholium), and not from the fact that there are, or could be, beings which have three, four, etc., attributes.

Finally, the examples [of infinite modes] which you ask for: examples
25 of the first kind [i.e., of things produced immediately by God] are, in Thought, absolutely infinite intellect, and in Extension, motion and rest; an example of the second kind [i.e., of those produced by the mediation of some infinite modification] is the face of the whole Universe, which,¹⁴⁶ however much it may vary in infinite ways, nevertheless always remains the same. On this, see L7S before II P14 [II/101/25–102/18].

30 With this, most excellent Sir, I believe I have replied to the objections you and our friend have raised. Nevertheless, if you think some ground for uneasiness still remains, I ask you not to hesitate to convey it to me, so that I may remove it too, if I can.

Farewell, etc.
The Hague, 29 July 1675

[IV/279]

LETTER 65 (OP)

TO THE MOST ACUTE AND LEARNED PHILOSOPHER B. D. S.
FROM EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS

Most Illustrious Sir,

I ask you for a Demonstration of what you say: viz. that the soul cannot perceive more attributes of God than Extension and Thought. Indeed, though I see this evidently, still it seems to me that the contrary

146. The gender of the relative pronoun, *quae*, which is feminine, implies that its antecedent must be *facies*, face, not *universum*, universe, which is neuter. Some interpretations of this passage seem to imply otherwise. E.g., Garrett 1991, 198.

10 can be deduced from E II P7S. Perhaps this is only because I don't grasp the meaning of this Scholium properly. I've decided, therefore, to explain how I deduce these things, begging you urgently, Sir, to be willing to come to my aid with your accustomed kindness, wherever I don't follow your meaning rightly.

Here's how things stand. Although I gather from that [scholium]
15 that the world is certainly unique, still it's no less clear also from that [scholium] that it is expressed in infinite ways, and therefore each singular thing is expressed in infinite ways. From this it seems to follow that the Modification which constitutes my Mind and the Modification which expresses my Body, although it's one and the same Modification,
20 is nevertheless expressed in infinite ways, in one way through Thought, in another through Extension, in a third through an attribute of God unknown to me, and so on to infinity (since there are infinitely many Attributes of God, and the Order and Connection of the Modifications seems to be the same in all).

25 From this, now, the Question arises why the Mind, which represents a certain Modification, a Modification expressed not only in Extension, but also in infinite other ways, why, I ask, does the Mind perceive only the Modification expressed through Extension, i.e., the human Body, and no other expression through other attributes?

30 Time does not permit me to pursue these matters at greater length. Perhaps all these doubts will be removed by more frequent Meditations.

London, 12 August 1675

[IV/280]

LETTER 66 (OP)

TO THE VERY NOBLE AND LEARNED
MR. EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Most Noble Sir,

For the rest,¹⁴⁷ to reply to your Objection, I say that although each thing is expressed in infinite ways [modes?] in the infinite intellect of God, nevertheless those infinite ideas by which it is expressed cannot
10 constitute one and the same Mind of a singular thing, but infinitely many [minds], since each of the infinite ideas has no connection with

147. This opening phrase suggests that our text of this letter is a fragment of what was originally a longer letter.

LETTER 67, FROM BURGH

any other, as I've explained in the Scholium to E II P7, and as is evident from I P10. If you attend just a bit to these things, you'll see that that
15 there is no remaining difficulty, etc.

The Hague, 18 August 1675

LETTER 67 (OP)

TO THE MOST LEARNED AND ACUTE

MR. B. D. S.

FROM ALBERT BURGH

Many Greetings

[1] When I was leaving my Country, I promised to write to you if anything worth mentioning happened on the trip.¹⁴⁸ Since something of the greatest importance has happened, I'm discharging that obligation
25 by letting you know that by God's Infinite Mercy I have been brought back into the Catholic Church, and made a member of it. How this
[IV/281] happened you will be able to understand in more detail from what I've written to that Most Illustrious and Knowledgeable Mr. D. Kranen,¹⁴⁹ Professor at Leiden. Now I'll add a few words for your benefit.

5 [2] The more I've previously admired the subtlety and acuteness of your intelligence, the more I now lament and weep for you. Though you're a very intelligent man, and have received a mind endowed by God with excellent gifts, though you love and are eager for the truth, nevertheless you've let yourself be led astray and deceived by that
10 wretched and very proud Prince of wicked Spirits. What is your whole Philosophy but sheer illusion and a Fantasy? Yet you commit to it, not only your peace of mind in this life, but the eternal salvation of your soul.

See what a wretched foundation all your ideas rest on. You presume that you've finally discovered the true Philosophy. How do you know
15 that your Philosophy is the best of all those which have ever been taught in the world, are still taught, or will ever be taught in the future? Not to get into the discoveries of future ages, have you examined all the Philosophies, both ancient and modern, taught here, and in India, and
20 everywhere else on the planet? And even if you have examined them all properly, how do you know that you have chosen the best?

You will say: "My Philosophy agrees with right reason, and the others are contrary to it." But all the other Philosophers—except for

148. I've commented in some detail on Burgh's exchange with Spinoza in Curley 2010.

149. Spelled "Craenen" in the OP, but the NS spelling seems to be more correct. On Kranen, see Meinsma 1983, 475, n. 1.

your disciples—disagree with you; with the same right, they proclaim
 25 the same thing about themselves and their Philosophy as you do about
 yours. And they accuse you of falsity and error, as you do them. It's
 evident, then, that to let the truth of your Philosophy shine forth, you
 must offer reasons which are not common to the other Philosophies,
 but can be applied only to yours—or else you must confess that your
 30 Philosophy is as uncertain and trifling as all the others.

[3] But now, confining myself to your book (to which you have given
 that impious title),¹⁵⁰ and mixing together your Philosophy with your
 Theology—since you yourself really mix them together (though with
 Devilish cunning you pretend that one is separate from the other and
 that they have different principles)—I proceed further.

[IV/282] [4] Perhaps you will say, then: “The others have not read Holy Scrip-
 ture as often as I have, and I prove my opinions from Holy Scripture
 itself, the recognition of whose authority makes the difference between
 Christians and everyone else in the world.” But how? “I explain Holy
 5 Scripture by applying the clear passages to the more obscure,¹⁵¹ and from
 that interpretation of mine I compose my Doctrines (or confirm those
 previously produced in my brain).”

But I beseech you to reflect seriously on what you're saying. How
 do you know that you are making that application properly? and [how
 do you know] that that application, rightly made, is sufficient for the
 10 interpretation of Holy Scripture? (and thus that you are establishing your
 interpretation of Holy Scripture well?) Especially when the Catholics
 say—and it's quite true—that the whole Word of God has not been
 given to us in writings, and so that Holy Scripture can't be explained
 from Holy Scripture alone—not by one man, but not even by the
 15 Church itself, which is the only interpreter of Holy Scripture. For we
 must also consult the Apostolic Traditions. This is proved from Holy
 Scripture itself and the testimony of the Holy Fathers, and it is equally
 in agreement with right reason and experience. So, since that principle
 of yours is quite false, and leads to ruin, where will that leave your
 20 whole teaching, which is built on, and depends on, this false foundation?

[5] If, then, you believe in Christ crucified,¹⁵² recognize that wicked
 heresy of yours, repent the perversion of your nature, and be reconciled
 with the Church. [6] For how else do you prove your heresies, but in

150. The TTP. Perhaps the point about the title is that it implies a connection between
 theology and politics which indicates that theology is a tool of politics. See Berti 1994, 1996.

151. Perhaps Burgh is alluding to TTP vii, 16–22.

152. Spinoza believed in Christ crucified, in the sense that he believed in the historical
 fact of Jesus' crucifixion, but not, I think, in the sense Burgh probably had in mind: that
 Jesus' death on the cross atoned for the sins of mankind. See Letter 78, IV/328a/8ff.

25 the way all Heretics who have ever left God's Church, leave it even now, and ever will leave it in the future, have done, do, and will do? They all use the same principle you do—that is, Holy Scripture alone—to form and establish their teachings. [7] Don't flatter yourself that perhaps the Calvinists (*or* the Reformed, as they're called), the Lutherans, the
30 Mennonites, the Socinians, etc., cannot refute your Doctrine. For as I've already said, they're all just as wretched as you are, and are sitting with you in the shadow of death.

[8] If you don't believe in Christ, you're more wretched than I can
[IV/283] say. But the remedy is easy. Repent your sins, realize the fatal arrogance of your wretched and insane reasoning. You do not believe in Christ. Why? You will say: "because the Teaching and life of Christ do not agree at all with my principles, any more than the Teaching of Christians about Christ himself agrees with my Teaching." But I say again: are you
5 then so bold that you think you are greater than all those who have ever risen up in the State or in God's Church—than the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the Doctors, the Confessors, and the Virgins, than innumerable Saints, indeed, blasphemously, than the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Do you alone surpass them in teaching, in
10 your way of living, and in everything? Will you, wretched little man, base little earthworm, indeed, ashes, food for worms, exult that you are better than the Incarnate, Infinite Wisdom of the Eternal Father? Do you alone reckon yourself wiser and greater than all those who have ever been in God's Church since the beginning of the world, and
15 who have believed, or even now believe, that Christ will come or has already come? On what foundation does this rash, insane, deplorable, and accursed arrogance of yours rest?

[9] You deny that Christ, the son of the living God, the Word of the eternal wisdom of the Father, was made manifest in the flesh, suffered
20 for mankind, and was crucified. Why? Because all that does not agree with your principles. But beyond what has already been proven—that you do not have true principles, but false, rash, absurd principles—I now say further that even if you depended on true principles and built everything on them, you still could not explain everything in the
25 world, what has happened or is happening. Nor can you boldly assert that when something seems to be contrary to those principles, it is for that reason really impossible or false. For there are a great many things—indeed, countless things—which, even if something certain can be known in natural things, you will nevertheless not be able to explain
30 at all. You will not even be able to remove the manifest contradiction between such Phenomena and your explanations of the other things, which you take to be most certain. From your principles you will not

explain completely any of the things brought about in witchcraft and enchantments by the mere pronounciation of certain words, or by simply carrying the words or signs, written on some material, or the astonishing
 [IV/284] Phenomena of those possessed by Demons.¹⁵³ I personally have seen various examples of all of these, and I know reports of countless such phenomena, very certain testimony from a great many highly credible persons, speaking with one voice.

5 What will you be able to judge about the essences of all things, even if it is granted that some of the ideas you have in mind agree adequately with the essences of the things whose ideas they are? For you can never be confident about whether the ideas of all created things are possessed in the human mind naturally, or whether many, if not all,
 10 can be, and really are, produced in it by external objects and even by the suggestion of good or evil spirits, and an evident Divine revelation. How will you be able from your principles, therefore, without consulting the testimonies of other men, and the experience of things (to say nothing of subjecting your judgment to God's omnipotence), to define
 15 precisely and establish for certain the actual existence or non-existence of the following things, the possibility or impossibility of their existing (that is, whether they actually exist or not, or can or cannot exist in nature): a divining rod for detecting metals and subterranean waters; the
 20 stone the Alchemists seek; the power of words and symbols; the apparitions of various kinds of spirits, both good and evil, and their powers, knowledge and activities; the reappearance of plants and flowers in glass flasks after they have been burned; Syrens; the gnomes which, men say,
 25 frequently show themselves in mines; the Antipathies and Sympathies of a great many things; the Impenetrability of the human body, etc.?

No, my Philosopher, you could not determine anything at all about these things, even if your native intelligence were a thousand times more subtle and acute than it is. And if you trust your own unaided intellect in judging these and similar matters, certainly you are already
 30 thinking in the same way about things which are unknown to you, or which you have not experienced, and which you therefore consider impossible, although they really ought to seem to you only uncertain until you have been convinced by the testimony of a great many credible witnesses.

Julius Caesar, I imagine, would have judged the same way, if someone had said to him that a powder can be made, and will become common
 [IV/285] in later ages, whose power is so great that it makes castles, whole cities, and even mountains themselves, fly up into the air, and that immediately

153. Burgh is more a believer in the supernatural than Boxel. Cf. Letter 53, IV/248b/25–27.

after being ignited, whatever place it is closed up in, it expands in a wonderful way, and breaks up everything which impedes its action.
 5 For Julius Caesar would not have believed this at all, but would have mocked this man with hearty laughter, as wanting to persuade him of a thing contrary to his judgement and experience, and to the sum total of military science.

[10] But let's get back on track. Wretched man, puffed up with Diabolic pride, if you're not familiar with the things mentioned above, and
 10 cannot decide about them, what rash judgments will you make about the awe-inspiring Mysteries of the life and Passion of Christ, which the very Catholics who teach them warn are incomprehensible? What trifling, useless raving will you babble about the countless Miracles and signs which after Christ[*'s* Ascension]¹⁵⁴ his Apostles and Disciples, and
 15 subsequently several thousands of the Saints, made known in testimony to, and confirmation of, the truth of the Catholic Faith, and which, through the omnipotent virtue of God, and through the same omnipotent Mercy and Goodness of God, happen even in our days, without number, throughout the whole earth? And if you cannot contradict
 20 these things, as you certainly cannot, why continue to cry out against it? Give in, repent your errors and sins, clothe yourself in humility, and be born again.

[11] But I should like to get down to the truth of what has happened, which is really the foundation of the Christian Religion. How
 25 will you dare to deny, if you consider it properly, the power of the consensus of so many tens of thousands of men—of whom several thousand far surpassed, and surpass, you in learning, in refinement, in true, precise solidity, and in perfection of life—who all, unanimously and with one voice, affirm that Christ, the Son incarnate of the living
 30 God, suffered, was crucified, and died for the sins of the human race, that he was resurrected, transfigured, and reigns in the heavens, God with the eternal Father, in unity with the Holy Spirit, and the rest of the things which belong to this, the countless miracles which have been done in God's Church by the same Lord Jesus, and afterward, in his name, by the Apostles and the rest of the Saints, by the Divine power and Omnipotence, miracles which not only surpass men's grasp,
 [IV/286] but also contradict common sense? Countless material indications and visible signs of these miracles remain to this day, spread far and wide across the globe, and [these miracles] are still being done.

154. OP: *post Christum*. NS: *na Christus Hemelvaart*.

Would I not be permitted, in the same way,¹⁵⁵ to deny that the ancient
 5 Romans ever existed, and that the Emperor Julius Caesar, after he
 crushed the Freedom of the Republic, changed their government into
 a Monarchy? Of course, I would have to ignore the great number of
 monuments of the Roman power, visible to everyone, which time has
 left us, and the testimony of all those weighty authors who have written
 10 Histories of the Roman Republic and Monarchy, which relate a great
 many particular things about Julius Caesar. And I would have to ignore
 the judgment of so many thousands of men who either have seen these
 monuments themselves or have put their trust in them, and still put
 their trust in them (since they are said to exist by countless witnesses),
 as they did and do put their trust in the histories mentioned.

15 On this foundation, namely, that last night I dreamt that the monu-
 ments remaining from the Romans are not real things, but mere illu-
 sions, and similarly, that what is said about the Romans is like what
 the books they call “Romances” childishly relate about Amadis de Gaul
 20 and similar Heroes, and that Julius Caesar either never existed, or if he
 existed, was a Melancholic man who did not really crush the Freedom
 of the Romans, or set himself up on an Imperial Throne, but was
 induced to believe he had accomplished these great deeds, either by his
 own foolish imagination or by the persuasion of friends flattering him.

25 In the same way, in short, could I not deny that the kingdom of
 China was occupied by the Tartars, or that Constantinople is the seat
 of the Turkish Empire, and countless similar things? But if I denied
 these things, would anyone think I was in possession of my faculties?
 Would they excuse my deplorable madness? All these things rest on
 30 the common agreement of several thousand men, and for that reason
 their certainty is quite evident. It’s impossible that everyone who asserts
 such things (and a great many other things) would either have deceived
 themselves, or have wanted to deceive others, through the succession
 of so many centuries, indeed, in a great many things, from the first
 years of the world to the present day.

[12] Consider, second, that from the beginning of the world to this
 [IV/287] day, God’s Church has been spread without interruption, and continues
 unchanged and solid, whereas all the other Religions, whether Pagan
 or Heretical, have at least had a beginning afterward, if they have not
 also come to an end already. The same must also be said about the
 5 Monarchs of kingdoms and the opinions of any Philosophers.

[13] Consider, third, that through the coming of Christ in the flesh
 God’s Church was transformed from the worship of the Old Testament

155. That is: if I followed your skeptical principles.

to that of the New, founded by Christ himself, the Son of the living God, and spread after that by the Apostles and their Disciples and
 10 successors. As the world judged them, these were unlearned men, who nevertheless confounded all the Philosophers, even though they taught the Christian Doctrine, which is contrary to common sense,¹⁵⁶ and exceeds and transcends all human reasoning. They were, in the judgment of the world, undistinguished men, base and ignoble, who received
 15 no aid from the power of Kings and earthly Princes, but who, on the contrary, were persecuted by them with every kind of tribulation, and suffered all the other misfortunes of the world. The more those Supremely Powerful Roman Emperors strove to hamper their work, and indeed, to crush it, killing as many Christians as they could, with
 20 every kind of martyrdom, the more it increased.

Consider that in this way Christ's Church spread throughout the world in a short period of time, and that finally, the Roman Emperor himself having been converted to the Christian faith, along with the Kings and Princes of Europe, the Church Hierarchy increased its power to such an extent that today we find it wonderful. Consider that all
 25 this was brought about through love, gentleness, patience, trust in God, and all the other Christian virtues (not by the din of warfare, the force of large armies, and the devastation of territories, as worldly Princes extend their boundaries), so that even the gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church, as Christ promised it.¹⁵⁷

30 Weigh also here the terrible and unspeakably severe punishment by which the Jews were forced down to the utmost degree of wretchedness and disaster, because they were the authors of Christ's crucifixion.¹⁵⁸ Read, think about, and then think again about, the Histories of all times. You will not find there that anything similar has happened to any other Society, not even in dreams.

[IV/288] [14] Notice, fourth, the properties included in the essence of the Catholic Church, which are really inseparable from that Church: namely,

[i] *Antiquity*, by which, since it took the place of the Jewish Religion, which at that time was the true [Religion],¹⁵⁹ it counts its beginning

156. An allusion to 1 Cor. 1:21–25.

157. This classic Catholic argument for the superiority of (Catholic) Christianity to other religions goes back at least to Aquinas (SCG I, vi, 3).

158. The accusation that the Jewish people were responsible for the death of Jesus has been a Christian tradition since the early days of the church, and remains a difficult subject for Christians and Jews alike. Two recent analyses of the gospel accounts which read them in quite different ways are Brown 1994 and Crossan 1996. Cohen 2007 offers a thoughtful reflection on the history of this tradition.

159. OP: *Religionis Judaicae, quae tunc vera erat*. NS: *de Joodsche Godsdienst . . . de welk in die tijd de ware was*. If the NS's definite article is justified, as I think it is, then we must

5 from the time of Christ, sixteen and a half centuries ago, throughout which period it reckons an uninterrupted succession of its Pastors, and by which it alone possesses Divine, pure and uncorrupted Sacred Books, together with a tradition of God’s unwritten Word, equally certain and unstained;

10 [ii] *Immutability*, by which its Doctrine and the administration of the Sacraments, as established by Christ himself and the Apostles, are preserved inviolate, and in their force, as is appropriate;

[iii] *Infallibility*, by which it determines and decides everything pertaining to the faith with the utmost authority, security and truth, according to the 'power bestowed on it by Christ for this end, and according to the
15 direction of the Holy Spirit, whose Bride the Church is.

[iv] *Unreformability*, since it cannot be corrupted or deceived, and cannot deceive, it is evident that it never needs reform;

[v] *Unity*, by which all its members believe the same thing, teach the same thing regarding faith, have one and the same altar and all the Sacraments in common, and finally, work together toward one and the
20 same end, obeying one another;

[vi] *That no soul is Separable from it*, under any pretext whatever, without at once incurring eternal damnation, unless before death it has been reunited with it through repentance—from this it is evident that all heresies have departed from it, whereas it always remains the same as
25 itself, constant, steadfast, and stable, as built on a Rock;

[vii] *Its Tremendous Extent*, by which it visibly spreads itself throughout the whole world; which cannot be asserted of any other Society, Schismatic, or Heretic, or Pagan, or of any other Political Regime or Philosophical Doctrine, since none of the cited properties of the Catholic Church
30 pertains, or can pertain, to any other Society; and finally,

[viii] *Perpetuity to the end of the world*, which the Way, the Truth and the Life himself has made sure, and which the experience of all the properties mentioned, promised and given to it likewise by Christ himself, through the Holy Spirit, also manifestly demonstrates.

[IV/289] Consider, fifth, that the admirable order by which the Church, such an immense body, is directed and governed indicates plainly that it depends very particularly on God’s Providence and that its administration is arranged, protected and directed amazingly by the Holy Spirit, as the harmony which is seen in all the things in this universe indicates the
5 Omnipotence, Wisdom and Infinite Providence which has created all

supply a noun, and “religion” seems the natural choice. Shirley (1995) made this choice. Wolf (1966) chose not to use a definite article.

things, and preserves them even now. For in no other society is such an excellent and strict order preserved without interruption.

Sixth, reflect on the following:

- 10 [i] that countless Catholics of each sex, many of whom are still alive today (I myself have seen and known some of them), have lived wonderful and most holy lives;
- [ii] that they have also performed many miracles, through the power of an omnipotent God, in the revered name of Jesus Christ;
- 15 [iii] that sudden conversions of a great many people, from a very bad life to a better, truly Christian and holy life, still occur daily;
- [iv] that in general the holier and more perfect Catholics are, the humbler they are, the more they consider themselves unworthy, and the more they yield to others the praise of a Holier life; and
- [v] that even the greatest sinners nevertheless always retain a proper respect for Sacred Things, confess their own wickedness, accuse their
- 20 own vices and imperfections, and want to be freed from them, and so to be improved.

It can be said, then, that the most perfect Heretic or Philosopher who ever lived hardly deserves to be compared with the most imperfect Catholics. From this it is also clear, and follows most evidently, that Catholic Teaching is the wisest, and wonderful in its profundity—in

25 a word, that it surpasses all the other Teachings in the world, since it makes people better than those of any other Society, teaches them the secure path to peace of mind in this life, and delivers the eternal salvation of the soul to be achieved after this.

- 30 Seventh, reflect seriously on the public confession of many Heretics hardened by obstinacy, and of the most serious Philosophers, that after they received the Catholic faith, they saw at last, and knew that previously they had been wretched, blind, ignorant, indeed, foolish and mad, when, swollen with pride and puffed up with arrogance, they falsely
- [IV/290] persuaded themselves that they were elevated far above the rest in doctrine, learning, and perfection of life. Some of these afterward led a most holy life and left behind the memory of countless miracles. Some faced up to martyrdom cheerfully and with the greatest rejoicing. Some
- 5 also (among them St. Augustine) became the subtlest, deepest, wisest and therefore, most useful Doctors of the Church, indeed, its pillars.

Finally, reflect on how wretched and restless the life of Atheists is. Sometimes they manifest great cheerfulness and try to seem to be

10 leading a pleasant life, with the greatest internal peace of mind. But see what unfortunate and horrible deaths they experience. I myself have

seen several examples of this, and I know, both from the accounts of others, and from History, a great many other, indeed, countless examples.

15 Learn from the example of these men to be wise in time.

In this way, then, you see, or at least I hope you see, how rashly you are committing yourself to the opinions of your brain. For if Christ is the true God, and is at the same time man, as is most certain, see what you are reduced to. If you persevere in your abominable errors
20 and most grievous sins, what else can you expect but eternal damnation? Think about how horrible that is. Think how little reason you have to mock the whole world (your wretched disciples excepted)! How foolishly proud you are, puffed up with the thought of the excellence of your intellect and with wonder at your very vain, and indeed, quite
25 false and impious teaching! How shamefully you make yourself more wretched than the beasts themselves, by denying yourself freedom of the will! Nevertheless, if you do not really experience or recognize this freedom, how can you deceive yourself by thinking that you are worthy of the greatest praise, and indeed, of the most exact imitation?

30 If you don't want God or your Neighbor to have mercy on you—far be it from me to think this—may you yourself at least have mercy on your wretchedness, by which you may strive to make yourself more wretched than you are now, or less wretched than if you had continued in this way.

Repent, Philosophic man. Recognize that your foolishness is wise and your wisdom mad. From a proud man, become humble, and you
[IV/291] will be healed. Worship Christ in the most holy Trinity, so that he may deign to have mercy on your wretchedness, and receive you. Read the Holy Fathers and the Doctors of the Church, and let them instruct you concerning what you ought to do, that you may not perish, but may have eternal life. Consult Catholic men who have been deeply
5 instructed in their faith, and are living a good life, and they will tell you many things you never knew, by which you will be astounded.

I have indeed written this Letter to you with a truly Christian intention: first, that you may know the love I have for you, even though you are a Pagan; and second, that I may call upon you not to persist
10 in corrupting others too.

I conclude with this: God wants to rescue your soul from eternal damnation, provided you are willing. Don't hesitate to obey the Lord, who has called you so often through others, and now calls you again, perhaps for the last time, through me. Having attained this grace by
15 the inexpressible Mercy of God himself, I pray wholeheartedly that you will attain the same grace. Do not refuse. If you do not listen to God now, when he is calling you, the wrath of the Lord himself will

be inflamed against you. There is a danger that you will be left behind by his Infinite Mercy and become a wretched victim of the Divine Justice, which consumes all things in its wrath. May the Omnipotent
20 God avert this, for the greater glory of his Name and the Salvation of your soul, and as an example to be followed, bringing salvation to the many unfortunate people you have led into Idolatry, through the Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who with the Eternal Father lives and reigns in unity with the Holy Spirit, God through all ages of ages. Amen.

Florence, 11 September 1675

[IV/292]

LETTER 67BIS¹⁶⁰

LETTER FROM NICHOLAS STENO
TO THE REFORMER OF THE NEW PHILOSOPHY
CONCERNING THE TRUE PHILOSOPHY

5 [1] In the Book they say you have authored—which I myself also suspect, for various reasons, that you have authored—I notice that you bring everything back to the public security,¹⁶¹ *or* rather, to your security, which, according to you, is the goal of public security. But you have embraced means contrary to the security you desire, and you have neglected completely that part of you whose security ought uniquely to be desired.

10 That you have chosen means contrary to the security you desire is evident from the fact that while you seek the public peace, you are throwing everything into confusion, and that while you strive to deliver yourself from all dangers, you are exposing yourself, quite unnecessarily, to the greatest danger. You have neglected completely that part of yourself which you ought especially to be anxious about, as is established
15 by the fact that you permit everyone to think and say whatever they like about God, provided what they say does not destroy the obedience which, according to you, ought to be given, not so much to God, as to man. This is the same as restricting every human good to the goods of a civil order, that is, to the goods of the body.¹⁶² You don't help yourself by saying that you reserve the care of the soul for philosophy: your

160. This letter does not come to us from any of our usual sources, but from its publication in Florence in 1675. See the Editorial Preface for more details. The book Steno refers to in his first sentence is clearly the TTP.

161. In TTP iii, 20, Spinoza says that the end of every state is to live securely and conveniently. I know of no passage in that work which would justify the gloss Steno puts on this statement.

162. Cf. TTP iii, 12; iv, 9; v, 19, and xx, 12.

20 philosophy treats the soul by a system formed from suppositions and you leave those unsuited to your philosophy in a condition of life like that of automata, devoid of a soul, and born only for the body.

[2] I see a man wandering in this darkness who was once a close friend
 25 of mine, and who even now, I hope, is not an enemy. I am convinced that the memory of our former companionship preserves even now a mutual love. And I remember that I too was once stuck in very serious errors, even if not exactly the same ones. So the more the magnitude of the danger from which I have been liberated makes evident God's
 30 mercy to me, the greater the compassion with which I am moved to pray that you receive the same heavenly grace I have attained, by no
 [IV/293] merit of my own, but only by Christ's kindness.

To add deeds to my prayers, I offer myself to you as most ready to examine with you all the arguments it may seem suitable to examine, to discover and maintain the true way to true security. Although
 5 your writings show you to be very far from the truth, still, the love of peace and of the truth I have seen in you in the past, which is not yet quenched in this darkness, makes me hope that you will lend a receptive ear to our Church, if only it has been adequately explained to you what it promises everyone, and what it offers those willing to approach.

10 [3] As for the first, the Church promises everyone true security, eternal security, *or* the enduring peace which accompanies infallible truth. At the same time it offers the necessary means for attaining such a great good: first, a certain pardon for evil actions; second, a most perfect standard for acting rightly; third, the true, effective perfection
 15 of all activities according to this standard. It offers these things, not only to the learned, or to those endowed with a refined intelligence, and not occupied with a variety of affairs, but indiscriminately, to all people, of whatever age, sex or condition.

Lest this astonish you, know that those who approach are required, not just not to resist, but even to cooperate (though this cooperation
 20 happens by his acting within, who proclaims his external word through the visible members of the Church). Though he says to anyone who approaches that he must grieve for his sins before the eyes of God, that he must show before the eyes of men works appropriate to this grief, and that he must believe such and such things concerning God, the soul, and the body, etc., nevertheless, his meaning here is not that
 25 one who approaches would have to advance toward these things by his own forces. For nothing else is required, for doing and believing such things, than not to deny assent and cooperation. This alone is in his 'power, since willing those things, and when you will them, doing

them, depend on the spirit of Christ, anticipating, accompanying, and perfecting our cooperation.

30 If you have not yet understood this, I am not surprised. I will not in any way attempt to make you understand. It is not in my power to do that. But so that these things may not seem to you completely foreign to reason, I shall outline briefly the form of a Christian government, insofar as this can be done by a new resident of that state, or rather, by a stranger who still waits on its lowest benches. The
35 goal of this government is that all men should direct, not only all their external actions, but also their most secret thoughts according
[IV/294] to the order established by the author of the universe, *or* what is the same, that in every work the soul sees God as its author and judge. In respect to this the life of each man infected with sins is divided into four stages.

5 The first is that in which man acts in all things as if his thoughts were not subject to any judge. This is the condition of men who either have not yet been purified by baptism or have become hardened in sin after baptism. This stage is sometimes called blindness, because the soul has no concern for God's seeing her—as is said in Wisdom 2: "Their wickedness has blinded them."¹⁶³—and sometimes death, because the soul
10 lies as if buried under passing pleasures, in which sense Christ said "Let the dead bury their dead,"¹⁶⁴ and many other things of that kind. It is not contrary to this condition that they say many things (often true things) about God and the soul, but because they treat [God and the soul] as if they were distant or external objects, what they say about them is always doubtful, and often contradictory. [This condition results in] frequent
15 vices, if not in external acts, at least in thoughts. This is because the soul, like the dead, is destitute of a spirit to give life to her actions, and is moved by every puff of desire.

The second stage is when a man, not resisting either the external or the internal word of God, begins to be mindful of him who is calling, when he recognizes, by the beam of this supernatural light, that there
20 are many things false in his opinions and vicious in his actions, and commits himself totally to God, who, administering his Sacraments to him through his servants, grants him invisible grace by visible signs. This stage of those who are reborn is called infancy and childhood, and the word of God which is preached to them is compared to milk.

The third stage is reached when, by conquering concupiscence through
25 continuous exercise of the virtues, the soul is prepared to properly

163. 2:21 in the Wisdom of Solomon, a work accepted as canonical in Roman Catholic, Greek, and Russian Orthodox Bibles, but not in Protestant or Jewish Bibles.

164. Matt. 8:22 (or Luke 9:60).

understand the mysteries hidden in sacred scripture, which she will not grasp until, already pure in heart, she has reached the fourth stage.

Then she [in the fourth stage] begins to see God and acquires the wisdom of the perfect. Here there is a perpetual, and sometimes also
 30 mystical, union of the will. There are examples of this among us even today.

[4] Thus the whole program of Christianity strives for this: that the soul may be transformed from a state of death to one of life, that whereas before she had the mind's eyes turned away from God, and fixed on error, now she always directs them away from every error, and has them turned toward God in everything, both the actions of body and those of the mind, willing and rejecting the same things
 [IV/295] her author, and the author of all order, has willed or rejected. So if you examine everything properly, you will find in Christianity alone the true philosophy, teaching things about God which are worthy of God, and about man which are in agreement with man, and leading its worshippers to the true perfection of all actions.

5 [5] As for the second point, only the Catholic Church gives whatever it promises to those who do not resist it, for only the Catholic Church, in every age, has produced perfect examples of the virtues, and even today prepares for posterity's veneration examples from people of every age, sex, and condition. You cannot legitimately doubt the trustworthiness with which it promises eternal security, if it provides, with utmost
 10 fidelity, all the means ordained for this end, including miracles. I have not yet completed my fourth year in the Church, and already I have seen such examples of holiness that I am truly compelled to exclaim with David: "Your testimonies are most credible."¹⁶⁵

I say nothing about the Bishops, I say nothing about the Priests. The words I have heard in intimate conversation with them were human
 15 signs of the divine spirit, as I would witness with my own blood, such are their innocence of life and power of speaking. Nor shall I name the many who have embraced the strictest rule of life,¹⁶⁶ of whom I might affirm the same thing. I shall cite only examples of two kinds: people converted from the worst sort of life to the most holy; and laymen, as
 20 you call them,¹⁶⁷ who nevertheless acquired sublime notions of God, without any study, at the feet of the crucified one. Of this kind I have

165. Ps. 92:5 (Vulgate = 93:5 in Protestant Bibles).

166. Referring, presumably, to the members of monastic orders.

167. *alterum idiotarum vestro loquendi modo ita dictorum*. An *idiota* is a common person, who is presumed to be ignorant or uneducated. The "you" is plural, referring not only to Spinoza, but to all non-Catholics. So Steno is claiming that there is a general assumption among non-Catholics that those who are not educated will have ideas of God which are not properly elevated.

known both men and women, employed in mechanical trades or bound to menial service, who by the practice of divine virtues were brought to understand wonderful things about God and the soul, people whose
 25 lives were holy, whose words were Divine, and whose actions were not infrequently¹⁶⁸ miraculous, such as the prediction of future events, and other things which, for the sake of brevity, I do not mention.

I know what objections you can make to miracles. But we do not have faith in miracles alone.¹⁶⁹ Whenever we see that the effect of a miracle is the perfect conversion of someone's soul from vices to virtues,
 30 we rightly ascribe that to the author of all virtues. For of all miracles I consider this the very greatest: that someone who has passed thirty or forty years or more giving complete license to their desires, in a moment of time should have turned against all wickedness, and become the holiest example of the virtues. I have seen this with my own eyes, and with these hands embraced it. Frequently they moved me and others to tears of joy. There is no God like our God.¹⁷⁰

[IV/296] Indeed, if you reflect on the history of past times, and on the present condition of the Church, not [as it is represented] in the books of our opponents, nor by those among us who are either dead, or at least have not yet laid aside infancy, but, as is normally done in learning
 5 every other teaching, from those who are considered true Catholics according to the profession of our own people, you will see that it has always stood by its promises and still does, every day. There you will find that evidence of credibility which will satisfy you, especially since you make a far milder judgment about the Roman Pontiff than the rest of our opponents¹⁷¹ and admit the necessity of good works. But I beseech
 10 you to examine our doctrines in our writings, which your own teaching concerning the strength of prejudices will easily persuade you to do.

I would gladly have cited the passages of Scripture attributing authority to the Pontiff, which you yourself deny only because you do not find it in Scriptures and do not admit that the Christian Republic is like the

168. G: *rato*, but the first edition has *raro*, and AHW assume this reading (as does Shirley 1995).

169. Bennett suggests the following paraphrase: "We aren't impressed by a miracle just because it is a miracle." This may capture Steno's intent better than my more literal translation.

170. Perhaps a reminiscence of various phrases in the Vulgate: Exod. 8:10, 3 Kings 8:23 (= 1 Kings 8:23 in Protestant Bibles), 2 Chron. 6:14, Ps. 85:8 (= 86:8 in Protestant Bibles).

171. It's unclear what Spinoza said about the Pope which might have led Steno to say this. None of the references to the Pope in the TTP seems apt. There's a passage in Letter 76 (IV/317a/10–17) which might justify the claim. But the probable date of that letter seems to exclude the possibility that Steno knew it when he wrote this letter. In any event, by the end of Letter 76 Spinoza is quite caustic about the Pope. Perhaps Steno is referring to something Spinoza said in conversation in the period when they were friends.

15 Republic of the Jews. But because your view about the interpretation of
 Scripture is different from our teaching, which admits only the interpre-
 tation of the Church, I pass over that argument at this time, and I say
 to the second argument that Christian government, which seeks only
 a unity of the Faith, of the Sacraments and of loving-kindness, admits
 20 only one head, whose authority does not consist in making arbitrary
 innovations in whatever matter he pleases—that’s the slander of our
 opponents—but in this, that matters of divine law *or* things which are
 necessary should always remain unchanged, whereas matters of human
 law *or* things which are indifferent may change, as the Church shall,
 for just causes, have judged useful—for example, if it should see that
 25 wicked men are misusing indifferent things to subvert those which are
 necessary. Hence in interpreting Holy Scripture, and in determining the
 doctrines of the Faith, it acts to preserve the doctrines and interpreta-
 tions delivered by God through the Apostles, and to prohibit new and
 human doctrines and interpretations. I shall not speak about the other
 matters subject to his authority, since the unity of belief and action so
 30 often enjoined by Christ should suffice to make you find monarchic
 government worthy of acceptance.

[7] Surely, therefore, if you are led by love of virtue, and if you
 delight in the perfection of actions, you must inquire diligently into
 all the societies in the world. Nowhere else will you find the pursuit
 of perfection undertaken with such fervor, and brought to a conclusion
 so fruitfully, as it is among us. This argument by itself can be like a
 demonstration to you that truly “this is the finger of God.”¹⁷²

[IV/297] [8] But so that you may recognize this more easily, first penetrate
 deeply into yourself and search your soul. If you examine everything
 properly, you will find it to be dead. You live among matter in motion
 as if the moving cause were absent or were nothing. For it is a religion
 5 of bodies, not of souls, which you introduce. In the love of neighbor
 you provide for the actions necessary for preserving the individual and
 propagating the species, but have very little, or hardly any, concern for
 the actions by which we acquire knowledge and love of our author.
 But you believe that everyone is dead with you, you who deny the
 light of grace to everyone, because you yourself have not experienced
 10 it. Ignorant of the certainty of faith surpassing all demonstrations, you
 think the only certainty is demonstrative. But is that very certainty of
 yours, which is confined within such narrow limits, demonstrative?
 Examine all your demonstrations, I beseech you, and bring me even

172. An allusion to Exod. 8:19.

one concerning the way thinking and being extended are united, by which the moving principle is united with the body which is moved.

15 But why do I seek demonstrations about these matters from you? You cannot even explain how things probably happen. Without suppositions you cannot explain the sensations of pleasure or pain, or the motion of love or hate. The whole Philosophy of Descartes, however diligently you have examined and reformed it, cannot explain to me
20 even this one single phenomenon, namely, how the impact of matter on matter is perceived by the soul united to the matter.

But what other notion of matter itself do you give¹⁷³ us, I ask, beyond what you derive from a mathematical examination of quantity concerning shapes, not yet proven to consist of any kind of particles (except
25 hypothetically)? But what is more contrary to reason than to deny the divine words of him whose divine works lie open to the senses, because they are contrary to human demonstrations made by hypotheses? And [what is more contrary to reason], although you [new philosophers] do not even understand that state of the body by whose mediation the mind perceives corporeal objects, than to nevertheless make a judgment about
30 the state of that which, when glorified by the change from corruptible to incorruptible, is to be united again with the soul?

Of course, I am quite convinced that [what you call] discovering new principles for explaining the nature of God, of the soul, and of body, is just inventing fictitious principles. For reason at any rate teaches that it is contrary to divine providence that the true principles concerning those things should have been concealed from the holiest men for so many thousands of years, to be uncovered first in this century by men
[IV/298] who have not even achieved perfection in the moral virtues. I would believe rather that those principles about God, the soul, and the body are true which have always been preserved from the beginning of created things to this day in one and the same society, the city of God.
5 That old man who convinced St. Justin¹⁷⁴ to pass over from a worldly Philosophy to the Christian Philosophy says of the first teachers of those principles that they were

173. Previously Steno had used the second person singular of the verb. Here (and below) he switches to the second person plural. I presume his "you" includes Spinoza, Descartes, and any other philosopher defending the "new" philosophy. Cf. AHW.

174. Justin Martyr (c. 100–165 C.E.), whose *Dialogue with Trypho* described his conversion to Christianity by an unidentified old man whom he met one day after a spiritual quest which had led him to examine Stoics, Aristotelians, Pythagoreans, and Platonists. The Trypho of the dialogue is a Jew whose criticisms of Christianity Justin rebuts.

the more ancient Philosophers, blessed, Just, precious to God, who spoke under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, and who prophesied that those things would happen which are now happening.¹⁷⁵

I would believe rather that the Principles proposed by such Philosophers—transmitted to us by successors like them, in an uninterrupted
10 succession, and by philosophers of the same kind even today—principles easily accessible by one who seeks them by right reason—are the only true principles, where the holiness of the life demonstrates the truth of the doctrine.

Examine thoroughly the principles and doctrines of this Philosophy, not among its enemies, not among those of its followers whom either
15 wickedness has united with the dead, or ignorance with children, but among those of its teachers who are perfect in all wisdom, precious to God, and probably already participants in eternal life. Then you will recognize that the perfect Christian is the perfect philosopher, even if that person is only a little old woman, or a serving girl busy with menial chores, or someone scratching out a living by washing rags, a layman
20 in the eyes of the world. And at the same time you will exclaim with St. Justin: “this one Philosophy I find to be both sure and useful.”¹⁷⁶

[9] If you wish, I will gladly take upon myself the task of showing you how the points in which your teachings depart from ours are partly inconsistent, and partly uncertain, although I might wish that as soon
25 as you have recognized one or two errors in your doctrines, compared with the evident credibility in ours, you would make yourself a pupil of the teachers I have mentioned and that among the first fruits of your repentance you would offer God a refutation of your errors which you yourself have recognized by the illumination of the Divine light, so that if your first Writings have turned a thousand souls from the
30 true knowledge of God, your recantation of them, confirmed by your own example, will bring a thousand thousands back to him with you, like a second St. Augustine.¹⁷⁷ With all my heart I pray for this grace for you. Farewell.

[Florence 1675]

175. As various commentators have observed, Steno’s quotation is a bit free. More accurate would be: “A long time ago . . . long before the time of those so-called philosophers, there lived blessed men who were just and loved by God, men who spoke through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and predicted events that would take place in the future, which events are now taking place.” The speaker (Justin’s “old man”) goes on to say: “We call these men the prophets.” Justin Martyr 2003a, VII, 1. (Similarly in Justin Martyr 2003b.)

176. Justin Martyr 2003a, VIII, 1.

177. Augustine’s *Confessions* record his eventual conversion to Christianity after passing through Manichaeism and Neoplatonism.

[IV/299]

LETTER 68 (OP)
TO THE MOST NOBLE AND LEARNED
MR. HENRY OLDENBURG
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to Letter 62

Most Noble and Distinguished Sir,

Just as I received your letter of 22 July, I set out for Amsterdam, intending to commit to the press the book I wrote to you about. While I was dealing with this, a rumor was spread everywhere that a certain book of mine about God was in the press, and that in it I tried to show that there is no God. Many people, indeed, accepted this rumor. As a result certain Theologians, perhaps the authors of the rumor, took the opportunity to complain about me to the Prince [of Orange] and the Magistrates. Moreover, the stupid Cartesians,¹⁷⁸ because they are believed to favor me, try to remove that suspicion from themselves by constantly denouncing my opinions and writings everywhere. Even now they're still at it.

Since I had learned these things from certain Men worthy of trust, who at the same time said that the Theologians were setting traps for me everywhere, I decided to put off the publication I was planning, until I saw how the matter would turn out. And I resolved to let you know what plan I would then pursue. But every day the matter seems to get worse, and I don't know what I should do.

In the meantime I did not want to delay any longer my reply to your letter. First, thank you very much for your most friendly warning. Nevertheless, I'd like a fuller explanation of it, so that I may know what doctrines you believe might seem to undermine the practice of religious virtue. For I believe that the doctrines which seem to me to agree with reason are also most conducive to virtue. Next, if it's not too much trouble, I'd like you to let me know the passages in the *Theological-Political Treatise* which have caused learned men to have misgivings. For I want to make that Treatise clearer with certain notes,¹⁷⁹ and to remove the prejudices conceived about it, if possible. Farewell.

[The Hague, September/October 1675]¹⁸⁰

178. Not that all the Cartesians were hostile to Spinoza. Van Bunge 2001 gives an account of Spinoza's friends in that camp which includes such names as Lodewijk Meyer, Adriaan Koerbagh, Simon de Vries, Pieter Balling, and Jarig Jelles. But as Van Bunge shows, Cartesians like Van Velthuysen were extremely nervous about being associated with Spinoza.

179. The first indication of a plan for a second edition of the TTP. There'll be a second mention in Letter 69. On the annotations which did survive in various sources, see the Editorial Preface to the TTP.

180. Date suggested by AHW.

[IV/300]

LETTER 69

TO THE MOST LEARNED
MR. LAMBERT VAN VELTHUYSEN
FROM B. D. S.

Most excellent and distinguished Sir,

I'm surprised that our friend Nieuwstad¹⁸¹ said that I'm considering a refutation of those writings which for some time have been published against my treatise, and that among other things, I'm planning to refute your manuscript.¹⁸² I know I never had in mind
10 rebutting any of my opponents,¹⁸³ so unworthy did I find all those to whom I would respond. And I don't remember saying anything to Mr. Nieuwstad except that I planned to clarify some more obscure passages in that treatise with notes, and to attach your manuscript to them, together with my reply, if I could do so with your permis-
15 sion (which I asked him to get from you). I added that if by any chance you were unwilling to give us permission because I said some things too harshly in my reply, you would have complete discretion to correct or delete them.

In the meantime, I'm not at all angry at Mr. Nieuwstad. Still, I did want to let you know how the matter stands, so that if I couldn't
20 obtain the permission I seek, I would at least show that I didn't want to publish your manuscript against your will. And though I believe it can be done without any danger to your reputation, provided that your name is not attached to it, nevertheless, I won't do anything unless you give me leave to publish it.

But to confess the truth, you would do something much more
25 pleasing to me, if you were willing to write down those arguments by which you think you can combat my treatise, and add them to your manuscript. I beg you, most earnestly, to do this. For there is no one whose arguments I would be more pleased to weigh carefully. I know that you are possessed only by a zeal for the truth,

181. Joachim Nieuwstad was secretary of the city of Utrecht from 1662 to 1674, at the end of which time the Prince of Orange discharged him along with various other followers of Jan de Witt.

182. "My treatise" is the TTP, and the manuscript by Van Velthuisen, Letter 42. Spinoza had met Van Velthuisen on a trip to Utrecht in 1673, and apparently the two men then came to a better understanding of one another. See Nadler 1999, 317.

183. Presumably Spinoza means here the opponents who have published attacks on the TTP, and not Van Velthuisen, whose ability he evidently respects.

LETTER 70, FROM SCHULLER

30 and I know the singular integrity of your heart. I beg you again
not to hesitate to undertake this task, and to believe me to be,

Your most respectful,

B. de Spinoza

[IV/301]

Mr. Lambert [van] Velthuysen

Dr. of Medicine

Living on the new canal

In Utrecht

[The Hague, Autumn 1675]

LETTER 70 (A)

TO THE MOST EXCELLENT AND ACUTE PHILOSOPHER

B. D. S.

FROM G. H. SCHULLER, M.D.

Most Learned and Excellent Sir, Most cherished Patron,

I hope that my last letter, together with the Experiment¹⁸⁴ of the
Anonymous author, has been properly delivered to you, and at the same
time that You are still well, as I am.

15 For three months I had no letter from Our Tschirnhaus. From that
I had formed the sad conjecture that some calamity had happened to
him on his trip from England to France. But now I rejoice to say that
I have received a letter from him, which, according to his request, I
must share with you, Sir.

I am to convey to you, together with his most solicitous greetings,
20 that He has arrived safely in Paris, and that he has met Mr. Huygens
there, as we had advised him to. So he has accommodated himself
to Huygens' mentality in every way, with the result that Huygens
thinks very well of him. He mentioned that you, Sir, had recom-
mended that he make Huygens' acquaintance, and that you value his
25 person greatly. This pleased Huygens very much; he replied that he
likewise values your person greatly, and that recently he received the
Theological-Political Treatise from you, which many people there think
very well of. They ask eagerly whether other Writings by the same

[IV/302] Author have been published. To this Mr. Tschirnhaus has replied that
he knew of none except the *Demonstration of the First and Second Part
of Descartes' "Principles."* Otherwise, he reported nothing concerning

184. To judge from Letter 72, this must have been a work dealing with a procedure for
making gold out of base metals. At the beginning of this letter, just before the salutation,
Schuller has placed an astrological symbol for the sun. He will repeat this in Letter 72.

you apart from the remarks already mentioned. He hopes that this will not be unwelcome to you.¹⁸⁵

- 5 Recently Huygens called our Tschirnhaus to him, and told him that M. Colbert¹⁸⁶ wanted someone to instruct his son in Mathematics. If a position of this kind would please him, Huygens would arrange it. Tschirnhaus replied by seeking some delay, but in the end said he was available. Huygens replied, therefore, that that proposition pleased M.
10 Colbert very greatly, especially since, not knowing French, Tschirnhaus will have to speak to his son in Latin.

Regarding the objection [Tschirnhaus] recently made [in Letter 65, IV/279/14–29], he replies that the few words I wrote at your request [in Letter 66] have revealed your meaning to him more deeply, and that he had already entertained the same thoughts (since [your words
15 in the *Ethics*] chiefly admit of explanation in these two ways). But the two following considerations led him to pursue the train of thought contained in the objection recently made. [i] First, otherwise P5 and P7 of Book II seem to him to be inconsistent.

- In [P5] it is maintained that the Objects [*Ideata*]¹⁸⁷ are the efficient cause of ideas,¹⁸⁸ which nevertheless seems to be refuted by the demonstration of [P7],
20 because it cites I A4—perhaps (as I rather think)¹⁸⁹ I am not making a proper application of this axiom, according to the Author's intention. I would, of course, be very glad to learn from him what his meaning is, if his affairs allow.

- [ii] The second reason which prevented me from following the explanation given was that in this way the Attribute of thought is held to extend
25 itself much more widely than the other attributes. But since each of the attributes constitutes the Essence of God, I certainly do not see how the one is not contrary to the other.

185. Tschirnhaus had instructions to say nothing about the *Ethics*, as becomes clear later in this letter.

186. Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683), finance minister of Louis XIV.

187. That is, the things represented by the ideas.

188. It's difficult to see how Tschirnhaus could get this out of II P5, which reads: "The formal being of ideas admits God as a cause only insofar as he is considered as a thinking thing, and not insofar as he is explained by any other attribute. That is, ideas, both of God's attributes and of singular things, do not admit the objects [*ideata*] themselves, or the things perceived, as their efficient cause, but [only] God himself, insofar as he is a thinking thing." So P5 quite explicitly denies that the things ideas represent are their cause, as Spinoza points out when he replies in Letter 72, where he asks whether there has not been a slip of the pen, either in Tschirnhaus's letter or in the copy of the *Ethics* he is using (IV/305/4ff.).

189. It's not clear in Schuller's letter precisely where paraphrase of Tschirnhaus ends and quotation begins. The use of the first person here indicates that by this point, at least, we have a quotation. My indentation is meant to convey my assumption that all the indented material (and hence, the whole of this sentence) is quotation. But AHW and the Pléiade editors take the quote to begin with the words here translated "perhaps (as I rather think)." Shirley 2002 punctuates in a way which would agree with my reading.

In any case, let me add this: if I may judge other Understandings from my own, P7 and P8 of Bk. II will be very difficult to understand, simply
 30 because it has pleased the Author (to whom they no doubt seemed so evident) to provide them with such short demonstrations and not to explain them at greater length.

Tschirnhaus reports, moreover, that in Paris he has met a remarkably learned Man, named Leibniz, who is very capable in the various Sciences, and also free of the common prejudices of Theology. He has
 [IV/303] entered into a close friendship with him, the basis for which is that he, like Tschirnhaus, works continually on the perfection of the intellect, indeed that he values nothing more highly than this, or thinks nothing more useful. In Morals, Tschirnhaus says, he is most well-versed, and
 5 he speaks without any influence of the affects, simply from the dictate of reason. In Physics, and especially in Metaphysical studies concerning God and the Soul, he continues, he is most expert.

In the end he concludes that Leibniz is most worthy of having your Writings communicated to him, Sir, if you first give your permission. He believes that great advantage will come to the Author from this, as he
 10 promises to show fully, if it would please you, Sir. But if not, don't worry that he will not conceal them, honorably, in accordance with the promise he made. So far he has not even made the least mention of them.¹⁹⁰

This same Leibniz thinks very well of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, on the subject of which, if you remember, he once wrote you a Letter.¹⁹¹
 15 I would ask you, therefore, Sir, unless there is some weighty reason against it, not to refuse to permit this, in keeping with your generous kindness. If it can be done, please tell me Your decision as soon as possible. When I have received Your reply, I will be able to reply to

190. In spite of these assurances, Tschirnhaus does seem to have shown less discretion when he shared a manuscript of the *Ethics* with Nicholas Steno. See the Editorial Preface, regarding Letter 67bis, pp. 366–67.

191. Unfortunately this letter seems to have been lost. Leibniz could be quite critical of the TTP in his correspondence with others. Writing in October 1670 to his former teacher at Leipzig, Jakob Thomasius, who had reviewed the TTP quite critically, he praised him for treating as it deserved that “intolerably outspoken book on the liberty of philosophizing” (23 September 1670, Leibniz, Akademie edition, II, i, 66). Wolf ([1966] followed by the Hackett editors) accuses him of professing whatever views were likely to suit his interlocutors. I think this is unfair to Leibniz. I believe he had deeply mixed feelings. While he deplored the tendency of the TTP to undermine Christianity, he admired the ability and learning of its author. So far as I can see, he never condemned it as harshly as his correspondents usually did. And he normally mixed some praise with his criticism, even when writing to vehement opponents of Spinoza. To Graevius, for example, who had described the TTP in an earlier letter as a “detestable and horrible” book, he expressed the wish that Spinoza might be refuted by someone who equaled his knowledge of “oriental letters,” but was dedicated to the Christian cause (5 May 1671, Leibniz, Akademie edition, I, i, 144).

our Tschirnhaus, which I am anxious to do on Tuesday evening, unless some serious obstacle forces You to delay.

20 Mr. Bresser, having returned from Cleves, has sent here a great quantity of the Beer of his Country. I suggested to him that he set aside half a Barrel for You, which he has promised to do. He sends you his most friendly greeting.

Finally, I ask you to overlook the roughness of my style and the speed of my pen, and to command me to carry out some service for
25 You, so that I may have a real opportunity to show that I am

Most Distinguished Sir,
Your very willing servant,
G. H. Schuller
Amsterdam, 14 November 1675

[IV/304]

LETTER 71 (OP)
TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED
MR. B. D. S.
FROM HENRY OLDENBURG

With Warmest Greetings

Reply to Letter 68

As far as I can see from your Last Letter, the Appearance of the Book you intended for publication is in danger.¹⁹² I can only approve your intention to clarify and soften¹⁹³ the things in the *Theological-Political Treatise* which caused trouble to your Readers. I would think
10 that these include especially those passages in the work which seem to speak ambiguously about God and Nature. A great many people think you confuse these two things. Furthermore, many think you deny the authority and value of miracles, the only possible support for the certainty of Divine Revelation, as almost all Christians are

192. Oldenburg's language (*publico destinati*) does not imply that he thought the *Ethics* was intended for the general public, but just that he thought it intended for publication (as Glazemaker understood it, in the NS).

Akkerman points out that although Spinoza's reply characterizes Oldenburg's letter as "very short," it might still have included more about the *Ethics* than the OP editors chose to reproduce, that material being omitted by the OP editors because Spinoza did not reply to it.

193. OP: *illustrare et mollire*. NS: *verklaren en verzachten*. Spinoza's letter said (IV/299/30–31) that he intended to clarify (*illustrare*) his treatise with notes, but not that he intended to "soften" (*mollire*) what he had said. Oldenburg is nudging Spinoza in a direction in which he had expressed no intention to go.

LETTER 72, TO SCHULLER

15 convinced. In addition, they say you conceal your opinion concerning
Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the World and only Mediator for men,
as well as your opinion concerning his Incarnation and Atonement.
They ask that you reveal clearly your thinking about these three points.
If you do this, and if in this matter you please intelligent Christians,
who value reason, I think your affairs will be safe. I wanted you to
20 know these things briefly, I who am most devoted to you. Farewell.
15 November 1675

P.S.: Let me know quickly, please, whether these few lines of mine
have reached you properly.

LETTER 72 (A)
TO THE VERY LEARNED AND ABLE
MR. G. H. SCHULLER
FROM B. D. S.

Most able Sir, Most honored friend,

I was very pleased to learn from your letter, which I received today,
that you are well, and that our Tschirnhaus has successfully completed
[IV/305] his trip to France. In the conversations he had concerning me with Mr.
Huygens, he conducted himself very wisely, in my judgment at least.
And I rejoice very much that he has found such a favorable opportunity
for the end he had set himself.

5 But I do not see what he finds in I A4 which seems to contradict
II P5. For in this proposition it is affirmed that the essence of each
idea¹⁹⁴ has God for a cause insofar as he is considered as a thinking
thing; but in that axiom it is affirmed that the knowledge *or* idea of an
effect depends on the knowledge *or* idea of its cause.

10 To confess the truth, I do not sufficiently follow the meaning of your
letter in this matter, and I believe that there is a slip of the pen, due to
haste, either in your letter or in his copy [of the *Ethics*]. For you write
that in P5 it is affirmed that objects [*ideata*] are the efficient cause of
ideas, although this is expressly denied in the same proposition.¹⁹⁵ And
it is from this, I now think, that all the confusion arises. So it would be
15 pointless for me now to try to write about this more fully. I ought to

194. This paraphrase of II P5 provides an interesting gloss on the phrase *esse formale*. Gebhardt's reading of the text (*ideae cujuscumque essentia*) is correct, though his *Textgestaltung* misreports both the reading of the autograph and Meijer's emendation of V-L. Cf. AHW, 537.

195. See above, at IV/302/18–19.

wait until you explain his mind to me more clearly and I know whether he has a copy which is adequately corrected.

I believe I know, from letters, the Leibniz about whom he writes. But why he has gone to France, when he was a counsellor in Frankfurt,
 20 I don't know.¹⁹⁶ As far as I have been able to conjecture from his letters, he seemed to me to be a man with a liberal mentality, and well-versed in every science. Nevertheless, I judge it ill-advised to entrust my writings to him so quickly. I'd like to know first what he is doing in France, and to hear the judgment of our Tschirnhaus after he has associated with him longer and knows his character better.

25 For the rest, greet that friend of ours in my name, as solicitously as possible, and if there is any matter in which I can serve him, let him ask whatever he wishes, and he will find me most ready to help him. I wish our most worthy friend Mr. Bresser well on his arrival, *or* return, and thank him very much for the promised beer. I shall repay him in whatever way I can.

30 Finally, I have not yet tried to test the experiment of your Author,¹⁹⁷ and I don't believe I'll be able to apply my mind to trying it. The more I think about the matter, the more I'm convinced that you have not made gold, but only separated out a little which was hidden in the antinomy. But more of this on another occasion. Now the lack of time prevents me. Meanwhile, if I can do anything for you, I am here, and you will always find me,

[IV/306]

Most excellent sir,
 Your very good friend
 and Most Obedient Servant,
 B. despinosa
 The Hague, 18 November 1675
 Mr. G. H. Schuller
 Doctor of medicine, Amsterdam

196. According to Remnant and Bennett, lx, Leibniz was sent to Paris on two assignments, both secret: to arrange the payment of a pension granted to Boineburg for diplomatic services to the French crown, and to persuade Louis XIV to direct his forces against the Turks in Egypt rather than against North Germany and the Low Countries. Had he known about these projects, Spinoza would no doubt have approved the latter plan and been indifferent to the former. Wolf suggests that Spinoza had got wind of Leibniz's plan for a reunion of Catholics and Protestants, "which could only result in their joint suppression of all freedom of thought and speech" (1966, 47). That may exaggerate the danger, but it does seem that such a reunion would have been dangerous for someone like Spinoza.

197. *Parentis*. Other translators have generally taken *parens* here to mean either *parent* or *kinsman*. But *author* is one classical meaning of *parens*, and Spinoza's subsequent use of the second person singular suggests he might suspect that Schuller himself is the anonymous author.

LETTER 73, TO OLDENBURG

LETTER 73 (OP)
TO THE MOST NOBEL AND LEARNED
MR. HENRY OLDENBURG
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to Letter 71¹⁹⁸

Most Noble Sir,

Last Saturday I received your very short letter of 15 November. In it you only point out the things in the *Theological-Political Treatise* which have troubled readers, although I had also hoped to learn from [IV/307a] it what opinions seemed to undermine the practice of religious virtue, which you had previously warned me about. But to explain my intention regarding the three points you mention, I say that:

5 [1] Regarding the first, I favor an opinion concerning God and Nature far different from the one Modern Christians usually defend. For I maintain that God is, as they say, the immanent, but not the transitive, cause of all things. That all things are in God and move in God, I affirm, I say, with Paul,¹⁹⁹ and perhaps also with all the ancient philosophers, though in another way—I would also be so bold as to say, with all the ancient
10 Hebrews, as far as we can conjecture from certain traditions, corrupted as they have been in many ways. Nevertheless, some people think the *Theological-Political Treatise* rests on the assumption that God is one and the same as Nature (by which they understand a certain mass, *or* corporeal matter).²⁰⁰ This is a complete mistake.

15 [2] Regarding miracles, I'm convinced that the certainty of divine revelation can be built only on the wisdom of the doctrine, not on miracles, that is, on ignorance. I've shown this in sufficient detail in Ch. 6, on miracles. Here I add only this, that I understand this to be [IV/308a] the chief difference between Religion and Superstition, that the latter has ignorance as its foundation, and the former, wisdom. And I believe this is the reason why Christians are distinguished from non-Christians,

198. OP, Gebhardt: *Responsio ad praecedentem*. In the OP (and the NS) the letters are grouped first by correspondent, then by date. In that arrangement our Letter 73 would come immediately after Letter 71.

199. Referring to Paul's speech to the Athenians, reported in Acts 17:22–31. The line quoted from Paul is itself, in Paul, a quotation from one of the Greek poets (perhaps Epimenides).

200. Spinoza attempts here to ward off a misunderstanding he had also warned against in a note to TTP vi, 10, where the point seemed to be that Nature is not just the extended world, but a being which has infinite attributes. (Spinoza did not use that technical term there.) The OP here reads: *massam quandam, sive materiam corporeum*. LC has: *massam quandam, sive materiam incorporeum*, incorporeal matter. Gebhardt thought that reading might be right, but this seems unlikely. The NS confirms the OP reading.

not by faith, not by loving-kindness, not by the other fruits of the Holy Spirit, but only by opinion. Like everyone else, they defend themselves only by miracles, that is, by ignorance, which is the source of all wickedness. And thus they turn faith, even though true, into superstition. But whether kings will ever permit using a remedy for this evil, I doubt very much. Finally,

[3] to reveal my thinking more clearly regarding the third point, too, I say that it is completely unnecessary²⁰¹ for salvation to know Christ according to the flesh. We must think quite differently about that eternal son of God, i.e., God's eternal wisdom, which has manifested itself in all things, but most in the human mind, and most of all in Christ Jesus. No one can attain blessedness without this, as that which alone teaches what is true and false, good and evil. And because, as I said, this wisdom was manifested most through Jesus Christ, his disciples preached the same thing, insofar as he revealed it to them, and they showed that they could pride themselves beyond other people in that spirit of Christ.

As for what certain Churches add to this—that God assumed a human nature—I warned expressly that I don't know what they mean. Indeed, to confess the truth, they seem to me to speak no less absurdly than if someone were to say to me that a circle has assumed the nature of a square.²⁰²

I think these words will be enough to explain what I think about those three points. Whether it will please the Christians of your acquaintance, you will be able to know better than I. Farewell.

[The Hague, c. 1 December 1675]²⁰³

201. OP, LC: *non esse omnino necessaria*. NS: *gantschelijk niet . . . nootzakelijk*. Perhaps the most natural rendering of the Latin would be “not completely necessary.” Wolf 1966 and Shirley 1995 have equivalents of this, as do Gebhardt/Walther 1986 and Dominguez 1988. On the other hand, the most natural reading of the Dutch seems to be “completely unnecessary.” AHW have language which I take to agree with my translation, as do Appuhn and Misrahi (Pléiade). So the translators are quite divided about the scope of the negation. The reading I offer seems to me more consistent with TTP v, 46, and Letter 78, IV/328–29. See also the Glossary entry SPIRIT.

202. If we supposed that a circle had acquired the nature of a square, all the while remaining a circle, we would suppose that it had contradictory properties. If it's a circle, all the points on its periphery must be equidistant from its center. If it's a square, the points on its periphery are not all equidistant from the center. The theological analogue would be ascribing contradictory properties to God: for example, omniscience insofar as he is God, limited knowledge insofar as he is man; etc. To have said this explicitly in the TTP would evidently have been to cross a line Spinoza chose not to cross.

203. Accepting AHW's dating.

LETTER 74, FROM OLDENBURG

LETTER 74 (OP)

TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED AND LEARNED

MR. B. D. S.

HENRY OLDENBURG

Sends Many Greetings

Reply to the Preceding

Since you seem to reproach me for excessive brevity, I shall purge myself of that fault this time by excessive prolixity. I see that you had
25 expected an account of those opinions in your Writings which seem to your Readers to destroy the practice of Religious virtue. I shall say
[IV/310] what most distresses them. You seem to build on a fatal necessity of all things and actions. But once that has been asserted and granted, they say the sinews of all laws, of all virtue and religion, are cut, and all
5 rewards and punishments are useless. They think that whatever compels or implies necessity excuses. Therefore, they think no one will be inexcusable in the sight of God. If we act by the fates, and everything, brought round again²⁰⁴ by an unyielding hand, proceeds in a certain and inevitable path, they do not understand what room there is for
10 guilt or punishments. It's quite hard to say what means there are to untie this knot. I should very much like to know and learn what help you can offer in this matter.

Regarding your opinion about the three points I raised, which you think fit to reveal to me, the following things need to be asked.

- 15 First, in what sense do you take *Miracles* and *Ignorance* to be Synonyms and equivalent, as you seem to do in your Most Recent letter? For the raising of Lazarus from the dead, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ from death, seem to surpass the whole power of created Nature, and to belong only to the divine power. That this necessarily exceeds the limits of a finite intelligence, bound within certain constraints, does not
20 argue a culpable ignorance. Don't you think it suits a created Mind and knowledge to recognize in an uncreated Mind and supreme Divinity such knowledge and power that it can penetrate into and do those things whose reason and means we puny humans can neither give nor explain? We are men, and it seems that nothing human should be considered alien to us.
- 25 Next, since you confess that you cannot grasp [the doctrine] that God really assumed a human nature, it is proper to ask you how you understand those passages of our Gospel and of the Letter to the Hebrews, the first

204. OP: *duraque revoluta manu*. I think Oldenburg is using a metaphor inspired by the regular motion of the heavenly bodies in their orbits.

of which affirms that “the word became flesh,” and the second of which says that “the Son of God assumed not [the nature of] the Angels, but [that of] the seed of Abraham.”²⁰⁵ I should think that the whole tenor of the Gospel is this: that the only begotten Son of God, the λόγον [the Word], who both *was* God and *was with* God, showed himself in human nature and by his passion and death paid the ἀντίλυτρον [the ransom] for us sinners, the price of our redemption. I would be very glad to learn what should be said about these and similar passages, for the truth of the Gospel and of the Christian Religion (which I think you are well-disposed toward) to be established.

[IV/311] I had intended to write more, but I’ve been interrupted by visiting friends, to whom I think it wrong to deny the duties of politeness. But the things I’ve thrown together in this Letter may have been enough, and may perhaps have been wearisome to you as a Philosopher. Farewell, then, and believe that I am always an admirer of your Erudition and Knowledge.

London, 16 December 1675

[IV/311a]

LETTER 75 (OP)
TO THE MOST NOBLE AND LEARNED
MR. HENRY OLDENBURG
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Most Noble Sir,

At last I see what it was you were asking me not to publish. But because this is the principal foundation of everything in the treatise I had intended to publish, I want to explain briefly here in what way I maintain the fatal necessity of all things and actions. For I do not in any way subject God to fate, but I conceive that everything follows with inevitable necessity from the nature of God, in the same way everyone

205. The first passage, from John 1:14, involves no translation problems. The second, from Heb. 2:16, does. My translation, minus the bracketed phrases, attempts to give a very literal rendering of Oldenburg’s Latin. I add the phrases in brackets to convey what I take to be Oldenburg’s understanding of the passage, which is quite similar to that of the King James translators (“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham”), though quite different from more recent English translations, e.g., NRSV: “For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.” Though modern translators might render this verse differently than Oldenburg does, his reading of the passage does not seem unreasonable given the surrounding context.

[IV/312a] conceives that it follows from the nature of God that God understands himself. Certainly no one denies that this follows necessarily from the divine nature, and yet no one conceives that God is coerced by some fate. Rather they think he understands himself completely freely, even if necessarily.

5 Next, this inevitable necessity of things does not destroy either divine or human laws. For whether or not the moral teachings themselves receive the form of law *or* legislation from God himself, they are still divine and salutary. The good which follows from virtue and the love of God will be just as desirable whether we receive it from God as
10 a judge or as something emanating from the necessity of the divine nature. Nor will the bad things which follow from evil actions and affects be any less to be feared because they follow from them necessarily. Finally, whether we do what we do necessarily or contingently, we are still led by hope and fear.

15 Next, the only reason men are inexcusable before God is that they are in his 'power as clay is in the 'power of the potter, who, of the same mass, makes some vessels for honor, and others for dishonor.²⁰⁶ If you're willing to attend briefly to these few things, I don't doubt that you will
[IV/313a] easily be able to reply to all the arguments usually raised against this opinion, as I and many others have already learned from experience.

I've taken miracles and ignorance to be equivalent, because those who try to erect the existence of God and Religion on miracles want
5 to reveal something obscure by something more obscure, which they're completely ignorant of. So they use a new kind of argument, by reduction, not to the impossible, as they say, but to ignorance. Otherwise, if I'm not mistaken, I've explained my position on miracles sufficiently in the *Theological-Political Treatise*. Here I add only this one thing:

10 If you attend to the following things—that Christ did not appear to the Senate, or to Pilate, or to any of the unfaithful, but only to the saints; that God has neither a right hand nor a left, and is not in any place, but is everywhere according to his essence; that matter is everywhere the same; that God does not manifest himself outside the World, in that

206. In Letter 74 (IV/310/1–11), articulating the negative reaction of Spinoza's British critics to the TTP, Oldenburg had complained that Spinoza's necessitarianism entails that no one will be without excuse in the eyes of God—i.e., that all would be excusable—and that this would make reward and punishment useless. Spinoza draws the opposite conclusion: that no one is excusable, appealing to that passage in Paul's epistle to the Romans (9:18–24) in which Paul asserts God's absolute right to do with his creatures what he will, as a potter may do as he wishes with the clay he is working. He will explain further in Letter 78. The metaphor has its roots in the Hebrew Bible (most notably in Jer. 18:1–11). See also Spinoza's discussions of this issue in the TTP (iv, 47–49, and ADN. XXXIV, at xvi, 53).

15 imaginary space they hypothesize; and finally, that the structure of the human body is kept within its proper limits only by the weight of the air—you will easily see that this appearance of Christ was not unlike that by which God appeared to Abraham, when he saw three men whom he invited to eat with him [Genesis 18:1–8].

[IV/314a]

But you will say that all the Apostles believed completely that Christ was resurrected from the dead, and really ascended into heaven. I don't deny this. For Abraham himself also believed that God had dined with
5 him, and all the Israelites believed that God descended from heaven to Mount Sinai, surrounded by fire, and spoke immediately with them [Exodus 19:18–24]. Nevertheless, these and many other things of this kind were apparitions, *or* revelations, accommodated to the grasp and opinions of those men, by which God willed to reveal his mind to them.

I conclude, then, that the resurrection of Christ from the dead was really
10 spiritual, and was revealed only to the faithful, according to their power of understanding, that is, that Christ was endowed with eternity, and that he rose from the dead (here I understand “dead” in the same sense in which Christ said, “let the dead bury their dead”),²⁰⁷ and at the same time that he gave, by his life and death, an example of singular holiness, and to that extent he raises his disciples from the dead, insofar as they
15 follow this example of his life and death. It would not be difficult to explain the whole teaching of the Gospel according to this hypothesis. Indeed only on this hypothesis can 1 Corinthians 15 be explained and the arguments of Paul be understood.²⁰⁸ Otherwise, by following the common hypothesis, they seem weak, and can easily be refuted—not to mention the fact that the Christians have interpreted Spiritually all the things the Jews interpreted carnally.

[IV/315a]

5 With you, I recognize human weakness. But may I ask you, on the other hand, whether we puny humans²⁰⁹ have such a great knowledge of Nature that we can determine how far its force and power extend, and what surpasses its force? Because no one can presume without arrogance [to have this knowledge], it will therefore be permissible, without boast-
10 ing, to explain miracles through natural causes, as far as this can be done. And it will be preferable to suspend judgment about the things

207. This puzzling saying, which occurs in both Matthew and Luke, has long been the subject of debate. See, for example, Sanders 1993, 225–26; Anchor Matthew and Anchor Luke. I would suppose that Spinoza interprets this saying to mean: “Leave it to those who are (spiritually) dead—that is, who do not appreciate the significance of Jesus’ life and teachings—to bury those who are (physically) dead.”

208. I take it that Spinoza means here that Paul’s account of the resurrection of the dead in 1 Cor. 15 can only be understood to be true if we interpret the resurrection spiritually, as involving a fundamental moral regeneration in this life, but not that Paul himself understood the resurrection in that way.

209. OP, LC: *nos homunciones*. Using the same language Oldenburg had used at IV/310/23.

LETTER 76, TO BURGH

we cannot explain, and also cannot demonstrate to be absurd, and to erect Religion, as I have said, only on the wisdom of the Teaching.

Finally, you believe that the passages in the Gospel of John and the Letter to the Hebrews are incompatible with what I have said
15 because you measure the phrases of oriental Languages by European ways of speaking. And although John wrote his Gospel in Greek, he still hebraizes.

However that may be, do you believe that when Scripture says that God manifested himself in a Cloud, or that he dwelt in the Tabernacle,
[IV/316a] and in the Temple, God himself took on the nature of a Cloud, or a Tabernacle, or a temple? But this is the most Christ said of himself: that he was the temple of God, because, as I said in my letter, God
5 manifested himself most in Christ. To express this more powerfully, John said that the word became flesh. But enough of these things.

[The Hague, c. 1 January 1676]

LETTER 76 (OP)
TO THE MOST NOBLE YOUNG MAN
ALBERT BURGH
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to Letter 67

What I could hardly believe when others told me about it, I have at last understood from your letter: that you have become, not only a
20 member of the Roman Church, as you say, but also a very vehement defender of it, and that you have learned already to revile your opponents and petulantly rage against them.

[IV/317a] I had not intended to reply to your letter. I was certain that you needed the passage of time more than you needed argument, to restore you to yourself and yours, not to mention other reasons, which you once approved when we talked about Steno, whose footsteps you now follow. But certain friends,²¹⁰ who from your excellent natural qualities
5 had conceived a great hope, as I had, asked me most urgently not to fail in the duty of a friend, and to think rather of what you recently

210. These may, as Wolf and others have suggested, have included Burgh's parents, whose grief at their son's conversion Spinoza mentions at IV/318a/16–18. Conrad Burgh, Albert's father, was a wealthy Amsterdammer, former Treasurer General of the United Provinces, and a friend of Spinoza's. Meinsma reports that when Albert returned from Italy, his father had difficulty tolerating his presence in the house, and arranged for various pastors to try to persuade him to return to the Protestant faith, unsuccessfully, as it turned out (Meinsma 1983, 454).

were than of what you are now. By these, and other arguments of that kind, I have finally been persuaded to write you these few lines, asking you earnestly to be so kind as to read [and weigh]²¹¹ them fairly.

10 I shall not, as the opponents of the Roman Church usually do, relate the vices of the Priests and Popes, to turn you against them. People often bring up these stories maliciously, more to irritate than to instruct. Indeed, I'll concede that in the Roman Church there are more men of great erudition, who have led commendable lives, than in any other
 15 Christian Church. For as there are more members of this Church, so there are also more men of every condition in it. Nevertheless, unless by chance you have also lost your memory, along with your reason, you can't deny this: that in every Church there are many very honor-
 [IV/318a] able men, who worship God with justice and loving-kindness. For we know many men of this kind among the Lutherans, the Reformed, the Mennonites, and the Enthusiasts.²¹² And, not to mention others, you know your own ancestors, who in the time of the Duke of Alva, with
 5 equal constancy and freedom of mind, suffered all kinds of torture for the sake of Religion.²¹³

So you ought to concede that holiness of life is not peculiar to the Roman Church, but is common to all. And because we know by this—to speak with the Apostle John²¹⁴—that we remain in God, and God remains in us, it follows that whatever distinguishes the Roman
 10 Church from the others is completely superfluous, and so has been established only by superstition. For as I've said, with John, justice and loving-kindness are the unique and most certain sign of the true Universal faith.²¹⁵ They are the true fruits of the Holy Spirit. Wherever they are present, Christ is really present; wherever they are absent,
 15 Christ is absent. For only by the Spirit of Christ can we be led to the love of justice and loving-kindness. If you had been willing to weigh these things rightly, you would not have lost yourself, and you would

211. Addition from NS and LC.

212. "Enthusiasts" were Christians who believed themselves to be immediately inspired by God. Cf. Locke, *Essay* IV, xix.

213. Philip II assigned the Duke of Alva to repress the Reformation in the Netherlands in 1567. He did this brutally. See Israel 1995, 155–68, or Parker 1985, 105–17.

214. Spinoza refers to 1 John 4:13, an epistle traditionally ascribed to the author of the fourth gospel, who in turn was traditionally thought to be the apostle John, son of Zebedee. Contemporary scholarship has cast doubt on both these ascriptions. Cf. HCSB 1815, 2072. Spinoza so liked this verse that he made it an epigraph for the TTP and cited it also in TTP xiv, 17.

215. Referring, perhaps, to 1 John 2:3, "By this we may be sure that we know him, if we obey his commandments." Taken in isolation this verse might seem to require obedience to all the commandments, not just obedience to the commandments to love one another and to be just. But the emphasis on love in this epistle is very strong.

not have driven your parents, who are now lamenting your misfortune, into bitter grief.

[IV/319a] But I return to your Letter, in which first you lament that I allow myself to be led astray by the Prince of wicked Spirits. I beg you to be of good heart, and return to yourself.²¹⁶ When you were in possession of your faculties, if I'm not mistaken, you worshipped an infinite
 5 God, by whose power absolutely all things happen and are preserved. Now you are dreaming of a Prince, an enemy of God, who, in spite of God's will to the contrary, leads most men astray and deceives them. (For good men, in fact, are rare.) And [you imagine] that because this master of wicked acts has deceived these men, God hands them over
 10 to him, to be tortured to eternity. The divine justice therefore allows the Devil to deceive men with impunity. But not the wretched men the Devil has deceived and led astray. They are by no means without punishment.

Would these absurdities still have to be tolerated if you worshipped an infinite and eternal God, instead of the one whom Chatillon, with impunity, fed to his horses in the city of Tienen?²¹⁷ And you weep that I am wretched? You call my Philosophy, which you have never seen, a
 15 fable? O, young man bereft of understanding, who has bewitched you, so that you believe you are eating that highest and eternal being, and have him in your intestines?

Yet you seem to want to use reason, and you ask me: "how do I know that my Philosophy is the best, among all those which have ever
 [IV/320a] been taught in the world, are still taught, or will ever be taught in the future?" I can certainly ask you this with far better right. I do not presume that I have discovered the best Philosophy; but I know that I understand the true one. Moreover, if you ask how I know this, I will
 5 reply: in the same way you know that the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right angles. No one will deny that this is enough, not if his brain is healthy and he is not dreaming of unclean spirits, who inspire in us false ideas which are like the true. For the true is the indicator both of itself and of the false.

10 But you, who presume you have at last discovered the best Religion, or rather the best men, to whom you have abandoned your credulity, *how do you know that they are the best among all those who have ever taught*

216. Akkerman notes two allusions to Terence in this line: *Heautontimorumenos* 822 and *Adelphi* 794.

217. In 1635 Gaspard de Coligny, Count of Chatillon, a Huguenot general in the Franco-Dutch army fighting against the Spanish in Belgium, is said to have fed the Catholic Eucharist to his horses, as an expression of contempt for what he considered Catholic idolatry (AHW).

other Religions, still teach them, or will teach them in the future? have you examined all those religions, both ancient and modern, which are taught here, and in India, and everywhere throughout the globe? And even if you had examined them properly, how do you know you have chosen the best? You cannot give any reason for your faith.

Now you will say that you are trusting in the internal testimony of the Spirit of God, and that the others are led astray and deceived by the Prince of wicked Spirits. But all those who are outside the Roman Church will make the same claim about their church as you do about yours, with equal right.

Moreover, what you add about the common agreement of many thousands of men, and about the uninterrupted succession of the Church, etc., is the same old song of the Pharisees. For with no less confidence than the adherents of the Roman Church, and with as much stubbornness as the Roman witnesses, they display many thousands of witnesses who report the things they have heard as things they have experienced. They trace their lineage all the way to Adam, and boast with equal arrogance that their Church has spread to this day, and remains unchanged and genuine, in spite of the hostility of the Pagans and the hatred of the Christians.

They defend themselves most of all by their antiquity. They claim, unanimously, that their traditions were received from God himself, and that they alone preserve both the written and the unwritten Word of God. No one can deny that all the heresies have arisen from them, but that they have remained constant for some thousands of years, without any state compulsion, solely by the effectiveness of [NS: their] superstition. The miracles they tell of [NS:—setting aside the thing itself—] are enough to weary a thousand babblers.

But what they are most proud of is that they count far more martyrs than any other nation, and that the number of those who have suffered, with a singular constancy of heart, for the faith they profess increases daily. This is not a lie. For I myself know, among others, a certain Judah, whom they call the faithful,²¹⁸ who in the midst of the flames, when he was already believed to be dead, began to sing the hymn which begins

218. Judah the Faithful was Don Lope de Vera y Alarcon, a Spanish Christian noble, who embraced Judaism after a study of Hebrew literature. He was imprisoned by the Inquisition and burned at the stake in Valladolid in 1644. His story is told in Menasseh 1652/1987, 149–50, the Spanish edition of which Spinoza had in his library. Menasseh cannot have been Spinoza's only source, since he mentions details not found there, such as Judah's beginning to sing a hymn as he died. There were many versions of the story. The hymn would have been Ps. 31:6.

5 “To Thee, Lord, I offer my soul.” And in the middle of the song he breathed his last.

I grant that the organization of the Roman Church, which you praise so highly, is well-designed politically, and profitable for many. I do not believe there is any order more suitable for deceiving ordinary
10 people and controlling men’s minds, unless it would be the order of the Mahommedan Church, which surpasses it by far. For from the time this superstition began, no schism has arisen in their Church.²¹⁹

So if you make the calculation correctly, you will see that only the point you mention in the third place [at IV/287/6] is in favor of the
15 Christians: namely, that unlearned and base men were able to convert almost the whole world to the faith of Christ. But this argument supports not the Roman Church, but everyone who professes the name of Christ.²²⁰

But suppose all the reasons you cite favor only the Roman Church.
[IV/323a] Do you think that by them you can mathematically demonstrate the authority of that Church? That’s far from true. So why do you want me to believe that my demonstrations come from the Prince of wicked Spirits, whereas yours are inspired by God—especially since I see, and
5 your letter clearly indicates, that having become a slave of this Church, you’ve been guided not so much by the love of God as by fear of hell, the only cause of superstition. [NS, LC: For I ask you,] is this your humility, that you don’t trust at all in yourself, but in others, whom many, many people condemn? Do you ascribe it to arrogance and pride, that I use reason, and that I trust in this true Word of God, which is
10 in the mind, and can never be distorted or corrupted?

Away with this pernicious²²¹ superstition! Recognize the reason God has given you, and cultivate it, unless you want to be considered one of the brute animals. Stop calling absurd errors mysteries, and don’t shamefully confuse the things unknown to us, or not yet discovered,

219. Ignorance of the history of Islam was common in seventeenth-century Europe. Locke thought all Muslims owed obedience to the Mufti of Constantinople, and through him to the Ottoman Emperor (Locke, *Letter* 134). Sunni Islam dominated in the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim area then best known in the West. The common practice of using an ethnic term “Turk” to refer to Muslims encouraged this confusion. See Southern 1962, Lewis 1993.

220. OP: *pro omnibus, qui Christi nomen profitentur*. LC: *pro omnibus qui Christianum nomen profitentur* (Leibniz’s emphasis), for all of us who profess the Christian name. NS: *voor ons alle, die de Christelijke naam belijden*. So both the LC and the NS have Spinoza identifying himself as a Christian. Akkerman finds the reading of the OP more probable. See Akkerman 1980, 46–47. Similarly Steenbakkers, who argues that the copyist who produced the version of the text used by both Leibniz and Glazemaker would have been more likely to misread *profitentur* as *profitentur* than the reverse. See Steenbakkers 2005, 15–19.

221. OP: *exitiabilem* (= NS: *verderffelijke*). LC: *execrabilem*, abominable.

15 with those demonstrated to be absurd, as are the horrible secrets of this Church. The more [these secrets/mysteries] are contrary to right reason, the more you believe they transcend the intellect.

[IV/324a] For the rest, the foundation of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, namely, that Scripture must be explained only through Scripture, which you so vehemently declare to be without any reason, and false, is not merely supposed, but also demonstrated conclusively to be true *or* firm, especially in Ch. 7, where the opinions of the opponents are also refuted.
5 To this we may add what is demonstrated at the end of Ch. 15.

If you're willing to attend to these [NS, LC: few] things, and in addition, to examine the Histories of the Church (of which I see that you are most ignorant), so that you can see how falsely the Popes transmit many things, and by what fate and what tricks the Roman Pontiff acquired the leadership of the Church, 600 years after the birth of
10 Christ,²²² I don't doubt that you will at length repent. I heartily desire this for you. Farewell, etc.

[The Hague, end of 1675 or beginning of 1676]

[IV/324]

LETTER 77 (OP)
TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED
MR. B. D. S.
FROM HENRY OLDENBURG

EY IPATTEIN²²³

Reply to Letter 75

You were exactly right when you perceived the reason I did not want that fatal necessity of all things to be published: so that the practice of
30 virtue would not thereby be hampered, and rewards and punishments would not become worthless.

222. Spinoza is no doubt alluding at least to the notorious forgery known as “the Donation of Constantine,” which was supposed to have granted Pope Sylvester I and his successors ecclesiastical supremacy over all Christian churches, and political authority over the western portions of the Roman Empire. Modern scholarship now estimates that this forgery dates from the eighth century; so it comes somewhat later than Spinoza thought. Nicholas of Cusa had challenged the authenticity of the Donation in 1433 (see Cusa 1991, III, ii), but left it to Lorenzo Valla to provide the definitive proof that it was a forgery in 1440. See Valla 2007. Spinoza may have other examples in mind as well, which probably include the False Decretals of Pseudo-Isidore. See Davenport 1916.

223. The Greek phrase Oldenburg uses as a salutation might be translated: “prosper” or “may things go well with you.”

[IV/325] What your most recent letter suggests about this matter does not yet seem to lessen this difficulty or to calm the human Mind. For if we men, in all our actions, moral as well as natural, are in the 'power of God as the clay is in the hand of the potter, how, I ask, can any of us properly be called to account for having acted in this or that way, when it was completely impossible for him to act otherwise? Will not everyone, without exception, be able to retort to God:

your inflexible decree and irresistible 'power have forced us to act in this way; we could not have acted otherwise. Why, then, and with what right will you subject us to the direst punishments, which we could not in any way have avoided, since you were doing and directing everything by supreme necessity, according to your will and good pleasure?

When you say that Men are inexcusable before God for no other reason than because they are in God's 'power, I would turn that argument completely around. I would say (with better reason, as it seems): men are for that reason completely excusable, because they are in God's 'power. For everyone can easily object: "your 'power is inescapable, O God; therefore, it seems that I deserve to be excused for not having acted otherwise."

Next, you still take Miracles to be equivalent to Ignorance. By that you seem to confine the power of God and the knowledge of Men (even the most acute Men)²²⁴ within the same limits, as if God cannot do or produce anything for which men cannot give a reason if they exert all the powers of their intelligence.

Furthermore, that Narrative of Christ's Passion, Death, Burial and Resurrection seems to have been painted with such lively and genuine colors that I would dare even to appeal to your conscience: provided that you are persuaded of the truth of the Narrative, do you believe that it is to be taken Allegorically rather than literally? The details the Evangelists have recorded so clearly about this matter seem to weigh heavily in favor of taking the narrative literally.

These, briefly, are the things I wanted to note regarding that subject. I beseech you to pardon them, and in accordance with your sincerity, to reply in a friendly fashion. Mr. Boyle greets you courteously. At another time I shall explain what the Royal Society is doing now. Farewell, and continue to love me.

Henry Oldenburg
London, 14 January 1676

224. Oldenburg's point, I take it, is that it is objectionable to limit God's power to things that men can understand, *even if* the men whose powers of understanding set the limits are the brightest men. (Spinoza will have some difficulty seeing that he has made the claim Oldenburg objects to [IV/328/5-7].)

[IV/326]

LETTER 78 (OP)
TO THE MOST NOBLE AND LEARNED
MR. HENRY OLDENBURG
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Most Noble Sir,

What I said in my previous letter—that we are for that reason inexcusable, because we are in God’s ‘power, as clay in the hand of the potter—I wanted to be understood in this sense: namely, that no
10 one can reproach God because he has given him a weak nature, *or* a mind lacking in power. That would be as absurd as if a circle were to complain that God did not give it the properties of a sphere, or a child who is suffering from a stone, that he did not give it a healthy body. Similarly, a weak-minded man can’t complain²²⁵ that God has denied him
15 strength of character, and a true knowledge and love of God himself, so that he cannot restrain or moderate his desires. For nothing else belongs to the nature of any thing than what follows necessarily from its given cause. But it does not belong to the nature of any man that
[IV/327a] he should be strong-minded. And no one can deny that it is no more in our ‘power to have a healthy Body than it is to have a sound Mind,²²⁶ unless he wants to deny both experience and reason.

But, you insist, if men sin from a necessity of nature, then they are
5 excusable. But you don’t explain what you want to infer from that. Is it that God cannot become angry with them? Or that they are worthy of blessedness, i.e., of the knowledge and love of God? If the former, then I grant completely that God does not become angry, but that all things happen according to his decree. But I deny that for that reason all men
10 ought to be blessed. Indeed, men can be excusable, and nevertheless lack blessedness and suffer in many ways. A horse is excusable for being a horse and not a man, but he must still be a horse and not a man. Someone who is crazy because of a dog’s bite is indeed to be excused; nevertheless, he is rightly suffocated.²²⁷ And finally, one who cannot govern

225. LC: *queri non potest*. Both the OP and the NS lack the negation, which is clearly necessary.

226. Bennett notes that Spinoza surely meant to write: “it is no more in our ‘power to have a sound Mind than it is to have a healthy Body,” and that this is what Oldenburg takes him to have meant when he replies at IV/329/20ff. Cf. also TP ii, 6.

227. Apparently the suffocation of patients showing symptoms of rabies (using their own sheets, pillows, and blankets) was long practiced as a form of euthanasia, intended to relieve the suffering of those afflicted with a painful disease which was (and still is) almost always fatal once symptoms develop. See Lise Wilkinson’s article on the history

15 his desires and restrain them by fear of the laws, although he too is to be excused because of his weakness, nevertheless, cannot enjoy peace of mind, and the knowledge and love of God. He necessarily perishes.

I don't think it's necessary to warn here that when Scripture says that
[IV/328a] God becomes angry with sinners, and that he is a judge, who finds out about men's actions, makes decisions about them, and passes sentence, it is speaking in a human way, and according to the accepted opinions of the common people, because its intent is not to teach Philosophy, and not to make men learned, but to make them obedient.

5 Moreover, I don't see why I seem to confine the power of God and human '*knowledge*' within the same limits, just because I have taken miracles and ignorance to be equivalent.

However that may be, I accept Christ's passion, death, and burial literally, as you do, but his resurrection, allegorically. I grant, certainly,
10 that the Evangelists relate the resurrection too in such detail that we can't deny that they themselves believed that the body of Christ was resurrected and ascended into heaven, where he sits on the right hand of God. We also can't deny that they believed this could have been seen by non-believers, if they had been present at the same time in the places where Christ himself appeared to the disciples. Nevertheless,
15 they could have been deceived about this, without harm to the teaching of the Gospel, as also happened to other prophets. I've given examples of this in my preceding letter [Letter 75, IV/314/1–9]. But Paul, to whom Christ also appeared afterward, gloried that he knew

[IV/329a] Christ not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit.²²⁸

of rabies in Jackson and Wunner 2002, or AHW, 511. Spinoza probably thought it also justifiable to prevent spread of the disease. Oldenburg's reply, confused though it is, suggests that this might be one reason for the practice.

228. Spinoza is evidently alluding to 2 Cor. 5:16, which in a fairly literal translation would read: "So from now on we know no one according to the flesh [*kata sarka*]. Though (*ei*) we once knew Christ according to the flesh, we no longer know him in that way." This is the KJV, lightly modernized. Modern translators of Paul tend to be more free. The NRSV has: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way." Furnish goes further: "So from now on we regard no one according to worldly standards, if indeed we have regarded Christ according to worldly standards, we no longer regard him in that way" (Anchor 2 Corinthians, 306). In addition to the different rendering of *kata sarka*, this also translates *ei* as "if" rather than "though."

I take it that the tendency to translate *kata sarka* freely is motivated by the fact that Paul had not known Jesus in person during his lifetime, and so did not know him *kata sarka* in the most obvious sense. Jesus is supposed to have appeared to him after the resurrection (cf. Acts 9:1–9, 22:1–16, and 26:12–18; and 1 Cor. 15:8), but this post-resurrection appearance would not obviously justify a claim to have known Jesus "according to the flesh," the resurrection body being of quite a different nature from that of the earthly body (1 Cor. 15:35ff.).

[IV/329b] [LC: I thank you very much for the Catalog of the Books of the most noble Mr. Boyle. Finally, I shall look forward to learning from
5 you the present business of the Royal Society, when the opportunity presents itself.]

Farewell, most esteemed Sir, and believe that I am yours in all zeal and affection.

[The Hague, 7 February 1676]²²⁹

[IV/329]

LETTER 79 (C)

TO THE MOST DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN
MR. BENEDICT DE SPINOZA
FROM HENRY OLDENBURG

Warmest Greetings

In your letter to me of 7 February there remain some things which seem to merit critical examination. You say that a man cannot complain
15 that God has denied him true knowledge of himself [God], and sufficient powers for avoiding sins, since nothing belongs to the Nature of anything except what follows necessarily from its cause. But I say that since God, the creator of men, formed them according to his own image, which seems to imply wisdom, and goodness, and power in its
20 concept, it seems to follow completely that it is more in man's 'power to have a sound Mind than to have a healthy body, since the physical soundness of the Body depends on mechanical principles, whereas the soundness of the Mind depends on choice and prudence.

You add that men can be excusable,²³⁰ and yet suffer in many ways. At
25 first glance this seems hard and what you go on to offer as a proof—that a dog gone mad from a bite²³¹ is indeed to be excused, but nevertheless rightly killed—does not seem to settle the matter, since killing a dog of this kind would show cruelty if it were not necessary to preserve

On any of these translations it will be true that Paul does not explicitly claim that he knew Christ *kata pneuma*, as Spinoza's paraphrase would require. Nevertheless his paraphrase seems reasonable. I think what he means is that whether or not Paul did, in some sense, know Jesus *kata sarka*, he did not glory in that fact, but only in the fact that he knew and had absorbed the ethical message Jesus taught.

229. This date is not given either in the OP or in the NS, but can be inferred from Letter 79.

230. C: *inexcusabiles*, inexcusable. But since Oldenburg is evidently referring to IV/327/10, editors since Leopold have corrected to *excusabiles*.

231. Another indication that Oldenburg is being a bit careless in this letter. He misreads Spinoza's example, according to which it was a man who had gone mad from the bite of a dog who would be excusable, but nevertheless rightly killed, not a dog.

other dogs, or other animals, or men themselves from a bite of this
[IV/330] kind which would make them mad.

But if God were to implant a sound Mind in men, as he can, no contagion of vices would need to be feared. And of course it seems very cruel for God to destine men to eternal torments (or at least for a time to dire torments) on account of sins which they could not avoid in any
5 way. Furthermore, the tenor of the whole of Sacred Scripture seems to suppose and imply this: that men can abstain from sins. Indeed, it abounds in curses and promises, proclamations of rewards and threats of punishments, which all seem to argue against a necessity of sinning,
10 and imply the possibility of avoiding punishments.²³² If this should be denied, the human mind would have to be said to act no less mechanically than the human body.

Next, the foundation for your continuing to take Miracles and Ignorance as equivalent seems to be this: that the creature can and must
15 have a clear insight into the Infinite power and wisdom of the creator. So far I am completely convinced that this is certainly false.

Finally, you do not support your claim that Christ's passion, death and burial are to be taken literally, but his Resurrection allegorically,
20 with any argument that is clear to me. In the Gospels the Resurrection of Christ seems to be related as literally as the other things. And the whole Christian Religion and its truth rests on this article of the Resurrection. Take this away, and the mission of Christ Jesus and his heavenly Teaching both collapse. It cannot escape you how
25 much trouble Christ took, once he had been raised from the dead, to convince his disciples of the truth of the Resurrection, properly so called. To try to turn all those things into allegories is the same as if someone did his best to undermine the whole truth of the Gospel Narrative.

I wanted to convey these few remarks to you again, in accordance
30 with my freedom of Philosophizing, which I earnestly beseech you to take in good part.

London, 11 February 1676

I'll write to you very soon²³³ about the studies and activities of the Royal Society, if God grants me life and health.

232. A classic argument for free will, to be found, for example, in Erasmus 1524.

233. G: *maxime*. But C, AHW: *proxime*.

[IV/331]

LETTER 80 (OP)

TO THE MOST ACUTE AND LEARNED PHILOSOPHER, B. D. S.
FROM EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS

Most Distinguished Sir,

First, I have great difficulty conceiving how the existence of bodies, which have motions and shapes, is demonstrated a priori. For in Extension, considering the thing absolutely, no such thing occurs.

Secondly, I should like to learn from you how to understand what
10 you said in your Letter on the Infinite: “Still they do not infer from the multiplicity of their parts that such things exceed every number.”²³⁴ For in fact all Mathematicians seem to me to demonstrate, always, concerning such infinities, that the number of the parts is so great that it exceeds every
15 assignable number. And in the example of the two circles which you use there, you do not seem to show what you had undertaken to show. For there you show only that they do not infer this from the excessive size of the intervening space, and that they do not infer it from the fact “that we do not know its maximum and minimum.” But you do not demonstrate as you wanted to, that they do not infer it from the multiplicity of the parts.

20 [NS: I have learned from Mr. Leibniz that the Tutor of the Dauphin of France, Huet, who is a man of outstanding learning, will write concerning the truth of human Religion, and will refute your *Theological-Political Treatise*.²³⁵

Farewell.]

2 May 1676

[IV/332]

LETTER 81 (OP)

TO THE MOST NOBLE AND LEARNED
EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Most Noble Sir,

What I said in my Letter concerning the Infinite,²³⁶ that [Mathematicians] do not infer the infinity of the parts from their multiplicity

234. See Letter 12, IV/59/10.

235. Pierre Daniel Huet (1630–1721) was appointed assistant tutor to the Dauphin in 1670. He became Bishop of Avranches in 1685 and published two books which criticize the TTP: his *Demonstratio*, and his *Quaestiones*.

236. NS: *in een Brief, aan L. M. geschreven*, in a letter written to L. M.

[IV/59/10–11], is evident from the fact that if they inferred it from their
 10 multiplicity, we could not conceive a greater multiplicity of parts, but
 their multiplicity would have to be greater than any given multiplicity,
 which is false. For in the whole space between two circles having dif-
 ferent centers we conceive twice as great a multiplicity of parts as in
 half of the same space. Nevertheless, the number of parts, both in the
 15 half and in the whole space, is greater than every assignable number.

Next, from Extension, as Descartes conceives it (i.e., as a mass at
 rest), it is not only difficult to demonstrate the existence of bodies, as
 you say, but completely impossible. For matter at rest, insofar as it is
 in itself, will persevere in its rest, and will not be set in motion except
 20 by a more powerful external cause. For this reason I did not hesitate,
 previously, to affirm that Descartes' principles of natural things are
 useless, not to say absurd.

The Hague, 5 May 1676

[IV/333]

LETTER 82 (OP)

TO THE MOST ACUTE AND LEARNED PHILOSOPHER,
 B. D. S.
 FROM EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS

Most Learned Sir,

Since you remind me of Descartes' opinion—that he can't deduce
 the variety of things from Extension except by supposing that it was
 brought about in Extension by a motion initiated by God²³⁷—I'd be glad
 if you would oblige me by indicating how, according to your medita-
 10 tions, the variety of things can be shown a priori from the concept of
 Extension. In my opinion, Descartes doesn't deduce the existence of
 bodies from a matter at rest (unless, perhaps, you would consider the
 supposition of God as a mover to be of no importance). For you have
 not shown how [the variety/existence of bodies] must necessarily fol-
 15 low a priori from God's essence, something which Descartes believed
 surpassed man's grasp.

So I ask this of you, knowing very well that you think otherwise
 [about this]—unless perhaps there's some other weighty reason why you
 have so far not wanted to make this plain. And if this [concealment] had
 not been necessary, which I don't doubt, you would not indicate such a
 20 thing obscurely. But be assured that whether you indicate something to
 me openly or conceal it, my feeling toward you will remain unchanged.

237. See, for example, Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy* II, 36, or *The World*, vi–vii.

Nevertheless, the reasons why I would particularly desire an explanation are these: I have always observed in Mathematics that from any thing you like, considered in itself, i.e., from the definition of each
 25 thing, we can deduce, anyhow, just one property, no more;²³⁸ if we want more properties, it's necessary for us to relate the thing defined to other things. Then, indeed, from the conjunction of the definitions of these things, new properties result.

For example, if I consider only the circumference of a circle, I will not be able to infer anything except that it exists everywhere like itself,
 [IV/334] or is uniform. By this property, indeed, it differs essentially from all other curves. And I will never be able to deduce any other properties. But if I relate it to other things, such as the radii drawn from the center, or two lines intersecting [within the circle], or to many [NS: other lines], I shall certainly be able to deduce more properties from this.

5 In some way this seems to be contrary to P16 of the *Ethics*, nearly the most important proposition in Book I of your Treatise. In this proposition, it is assumed as known that from the given definition of each thing many properties can be deduced. This seems to me impossible, if we do not relate the thing defined to other things. And it has the
 10 further result that I cannot see how, from any Attribute considered by itself, e.g., from Extension, an infinite variety of bodies can arise.²³⁹ Or if you think that this can't be inferred from one [Attribute] considered by itself, but can be inferred from all [the Attributes] taken together, I'd like you to explain how this will have to be conceived. Farewell, etc.

Paris, 23 June 1676

238. OP: *unicam saltem proprietatem*. NS: *niet meer dan een enige eigenschap*. Pace Wolf and Shirley, if *unicam* is to be given the sense required by the context, *saltem* cannot be translated "at least." I owe this correction of an earlier draft to Bennett.

239. OP: *ex . . . Extensione infinita corporum varietas exurgere possit*. NS: *uit d'uitgestrektheid, een oneindige verscheidenheit van lichamen zou kunnen ontslaan*. The accent mark on *infinita* in the OP makes it an ablative, modifying *Extensione*: "from infinite Extension, a variety of bodies can arise." The NS would be translated: "From Extension, an infinite variety of bodies could arise." Gebhardt deleted the accent mark in his 1925 edition, but had translated the OP text in Gebhardt/Walther 1986. Translators have been divided: AHW, Wolf, Appuhn, and Misrahi all follow the OP. Shirley and Dominguez follow the NS, Shirley without comment, Dominguez with an argument designed to counter Akkerman's critique of Gebhardt's decision. He appeals to Letter 59 (IV/268/25ff.), which indicates that Tschirnhaus was puzzled that so many varieties of body could arise from extension. He doesn't ask there how *infinitely many* varieties might arise, but his reference to I P16 suggests that he may have interpreted that proposition as implying that infinitely many kinds of extended thing were supposed to follow from the attribute of extension. The situation is unclear, but my translation assumes that the NS text is correct.

[IV/334]

LETTER 83 (OP)

TO THE MOST NOBLE AND LEARNED
MR. EHRENFRIED WALTHER VON TSCHIRNHAUS
FROM B. D. S.

Reply to the Preceding

Most Noble Sir,

You ask whether a variety of things can be demonstrated a priori from the concept of Extension alone. I believe I have already shown clearly enough that this is impossible, and that therefore Descartes defines
25 matter badly by Extension, but that it must necessarily be explained by an attribute which expresses eternal and infinite essence. But perhaps I will pursue these matters more clearly with you some other time, if life lasts.²⁴⁰ For up till now I have not been able to set out anything concerning them in an orderly way.

[IV/335]

But as for what you add—that from the definition of each thing, considered in itself, we can deduce only one property—perhaps this is correct for very simple things, or beings of reason (under which I include shapes also), but not for real beings. For from the mere fact
5 that I define God to be a Being to whose essence existence pertains,²⁴¹ I infer many of his properties: that he exists necessarily, that he is unique, immutable, infinite, etc. In this way, I might mention many other examples, but for now I will omit them.

Finally, would you inquire whether M. Huet's Treatise has been published yet—I mean the one you wrote me about previously, directed
10 against the *Theological-Political Treatise*. [If so,] will you be able to send me a copy? Again, do you already know what has recently been discovered concerning Refraction?²⁴²

With this, most Noble Sir, farewell, and continue to love, etc.

[NS: Your B. d. S.]

The Hague, 15 July 1676

240. Spinoza had about seven months to live at this point.

241. Spinoza here takes as a definition of God a formula he treats as a proposition in the *Ethics*: I P7 (AHW).

242. Wolf (1966) suggests that Spinoza may be referring to either one of two discoveries which at that time were still recent: Newton's discovery that a prism resolves a beam of light into colored beams with different indices of refraction, or Bartholinus' discovery of the double refraction of Iceland spar.

[IV/335]

LETTER 84 (NS)

LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR TO ONE OF HIS FRIENDS
WHICH IS SUITABLE TO SERVE AS A PREFACE
TO THIS POLITICAL TREATISE²⁴³

Dear Friend,

Yesterday I received your welcome letter. I thank you heartily for
20 the kind concern you show for me. I would not let this opportunity go
by, etc., if I did not have something in hand which I judge to be rather
useful, and which, I believe, will be more pleasing to you: composing
the *Political Treatise* I began some time ago, on your recommendation.

Six Chapters of this treatise are already complete. The *first* contains,
25 as it were, an Introduction to the Work itself; the *second* treats of natural
Right; the *third*, of the Right of the Supreme 'Powers; the *fourth*, what
matters of State depend only on the governance of the Supreme 'Powers;
[IV/336] *fifth*, what is the ultimate thing a State can aim at;²⁴⁴ and *sixth*, how a
Monarchic Government must be set up, so as not to fall into Tyranny.

Now I am busy with the *seventh* chapter, where I demonstrate Methodi-
cally all the main points of the preceding sixth chapter, concerning the
organization of a well-ordered Monarchy. Afterward I'll proceed to
5 *Aristocratic and Popular Governments*, and finally to the Laws and other
particular Questions concerning Politics. With this, farewell, etc.

[mid-1676?]²⁴⁵

243. For reasons explained in the Editorial Preface, p. 372, I assume that Spinoza's unnamed friend was probably Jarig Jelles, and thus that this letter was probably written originally in Dutch. So I take the NS version to be probably closer to the original than the OP version—which is not to say that I think it must be a faithful transcription of the original. See Akkerman 1980, 272–73. The marginal page and line numbers are those of the OP translation.

244. The NS reads: *wat het uiterste is, dat een Staat kan betrachten*, which is what I have translated. The OP reads: *quidnam sit extremum, & summum, quod Societas potest considerare*, what is the ultimate and highest thing a Society can consider. Akkerman (1980, 272–73) has argued, persuasively in my view, that the NS version summarizes more accurately the actual contents of Ch. v. See particularly TP v, 5.

245. AHW conjecture that this letter was written in the last half of 1676. I would be inclined to put it somewhat earlier, say, in the summer of that year. Jelles says, in his preface to the NS, that Spinoza wrote the *Political Treatise* “shortly before his death” (Akkerman 1980, 248). But it's hard to believe that he began a work of that length (87 pages in the Gebhardt edition) *very* shortly before his death (say, within six months of his death). On the other hand, it seems unlikely that he would have begun work on this treatise before late 1675. In Letter 68, which AHW conjecturally date September or October 1675, he still seems preoccupied with his attempt to publish the *Ethics*. When he writes Letter 84, he is about halfway through the TP. (There are thirty-four Gebhardt pages in the six chapters before Ch. vii, and thirty-seven in the three-plus chapters which come after it. Ch. vii itself is sixteen Gebhardt pages long.) If we assume that he began work on the TP late in 1675, and was able to continue through late 1676, and perhaps into January 1677, then the probable date of this letter would seem to be sometime in the summer of 1676. By early February 1677 he was very ill (*Continuum Companion* 2011, 36).

Designs for Stable States



EDITORIAL PREFACE

THE *POLITICAL TREATISE* (TP) is Spinoza's last work, begun probably around the end of 1675 or early in 1676, and left unfinished at his death on 21 February 1677.¹ After the *Ethics* and the TTP, it's his most substantial work, and deserves careful attention. Primarily concerned with questions about the relative merits of the different forms of government and the best ways of organizing them, it offers us the materials for a much deeper understanding of Spinoza's political philosophy than we could glean from his other works. He is quite outspoken in his criticism of Christian theology, sharply challenging the doctrine of original sin (ii, 6), while articulating a theory of human nature which acknowledges that there is some truth in that doctrine. His grounds for generally preferring democracy to aristocracy, and aristocracy to monarchy, become much clearer. And perhaps in this work he rejects social contract theory of the TTP,² though that seems to me unclear. If he does reject it, that would be evidence of a significant change in his thought about the foundations of the state. What can't be disputed is that here Spinoza makes significant appeals to experience and history which need to be taken into account, not only in discussions of his political theory, but in also discussions of his theory of knowledge.³

THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY

The central thesis of Spinoza's moral and political philosophy is that nothing is more useful to us than living in a community with other people, and binding ourselves to our fellow citizens by such ties as are most apt "to make us one people" (E IV App. §12). The TTP enumerated the advantages we can gain from such associations: they give us the security without which our enjoyment of any other good is at best precarious; and they make possible a division of labor which not only provides us with the means to subsist, but also frees us to cultivate the arts and sciences. The more we advance in the arts and sciences, the better we understand the world around us, both natural and social. The better we understand that world, the closer we come to the knowledge and love of God. So living in a community with others is essential to bringing us closer to our greatest good.

1. See Letter 84, the annotation there, and *Continuum Companion* 2011, 36.

2. For arguments in favor of this view, see Wernham, or Matheron 1969, 1990.

3. On experience, see i, 2, 3; ii, 6; vii, 30; xi, 2. On history: vii, 14, 18, 24.

The prospective benefits of community, then, are immense. But the path to these goods is not easy. We are not very rational. Much of the time we don't know what it would be good for us to do; when we do know, much of the time we don't do what we know we should. In the *Ethics* Spinoza had quoted Ovid's Medea:

A strange power draws me on against my will. Desire persuades me one way, reason another. I see the better and approve it, but I follow the worse.⁴

He might have quoted Paul:

I do not understand my own actions. . . . For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. (Romans 7:15, 19)

Paul seems here to take himself as representative of sinful humanity:

All, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin. . . . There is no one who is righteous, not even one.⁵

Spinoza's version of this will say:

it's not possible for anyone to always use reason and to consistently be at the height of human freedom. (TP ii, 8)

But this allows that some people—not many, but some—act rationally, and hence are virtuous, most of the time, and that more could act rationally than do. Virtue may be extremely rare, but it does exist (TTP xii, 7; TP vi, 6).

Trying to develop strategies an individual might use to overcome his bondage to the passions was the main project of the later parts of the *Ethics*. In the *Political Treatise* Spinoza treats this problem as a political one. Many of our passions stand in the way of the communities and collective action we can see that we need (TP i, 5). Though we may pity the less fortunate among us, and acknowledge a religious duty to help them, the teachings of religion often give way when they seem to conflict with self-interest. We find reasons to think that the poor have brought their poverty on themselves, and that it is better to leave them to their own devices than to help. Everyone wants others to live

4. Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII, 19–21, LCL translation. Spinoza quotes part of this passage in E IV P17S.

5. Rom. 3:9–10. The interpretation of Paul is controversial, and some recent interpreters would emphasize passages which make him sound less pessimistic about the human capacity to do good than he does here. See, for example, Sanders 2001 or Wills 2007. Both these works are popularizations, of course, but popularizations by highly respected scholars, who represent a significant trend in New Testament scholarship. I've discussed the issues in Curley 2015b. See also the annotation of TP ii, 8.

as he thinks they should live, approving what he approves, and rejecting what he rejects. Everyone wants to be first, even at great cost to others. These are all obstacles to community.

If we had to rely on reason to get us to do what in our own interest we ought to do, we would be in trouble. Fortunately, some of our passions have a more positive effect, moving us to form communities and make the accommodations necessary if we are to live in a community. When a group of people agree to be led “as if by one mind,” they generally do this because some affect leads them to cooperate: they have a common hope, or a common fear, or perhaps a common desire for vengeance (iii, 9). Most of all, they fear being alone, because they know they can’t defend themselves alone, or provide for their other needs alone (ii, 15; vi, 1). So they agree to be led “as if by one mind.”

A SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY?

If a social contract is just an agreement—possibly explicit, but also possibly tacit—which men make with one another to adopt rules of cooperation for their mutual advantage,⁶ then in the *Political Treatise* Spinoza remains the contract theorist he was in the *Theological-Political Treatise*. If a social contract requires more than that—say, an explicit promise which is morally binding, or motivation by a rational calculation of the benefits of joint action—then he was not a social contract theorist even in the TTP. For even in that earlier work Spinoza did not claim that there was anything inherently binding about having made a promise. A contract is a mutual promise, and promises “can have no force except by reason of [their] utility” (TTP xvi, 20). When they seem to lose their utility, they lose their force. And even in that earlier work he did not think the decision to enter into a contract was necessarily to be explained by the rationality of the agreement for the contracting parties (TTP xvi, 7). It might well be eminently

6. On a certain view of the matter, Hume was a critic of social contract theory when he wrote in his *Treatise of Human Nature*: “Two men who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, though they have never given promises to each other. Nor is the rule concerning the stability of possession the less derived from human conventions, that it arises gradually, and acquires force by a slow progression, and by our repeated experience of the inconveniences of transgressing it. On the contrary, this experience assures us still more, that the sense of interest has become common to all our fellows, and gives us a confidence of the future regularity of their conduct; and it is only on the expectation of this, that our moderation and abstinence are founded” (III, ii, 2). But the better view, I think, is that he exemplifies a different, evolutionary form of social contract theory, not open to the same objections as the more rationalistic tradition. For the contrast, see Skyrms 1996.

rational to enter into the agreement; if we judge that it is, we endorse the agreement. But it does not follow that it's not some passion or passions, rather than reason, which actually explains the agreement. Spinoza does not seem to have changed his mind on these points when he wrote the TP. He may have merely changed the way he expressed himself, in order to avoid misunderstanding. It's a notable fact about the *Political Treatise* that the language of contract is much less prominent there than it was in the *Theological-Political Treatise*. Less prominent, but not absent.

BEING LED "AS IF BY ONE MIND"

What tends to replace the language of contract is the idea that people agree to be led "as if by one mind." What does it mean to say that a group of people is led in this way? Clearly, not that they are *actually* led by one mind, that there is literally one mind directing their affairs. Spinoza dislikes monarchy, or any other form of autocratic government, whatever its name. In one passage (iii, 7) he identifies being led "as if by one mind" with a "union of minds," by which he seems to mean a commonality of purpose, an agreement at least about the basic ends of the union and the principal means of attaining them.⁷ In one place he maintains that such a union is required in a state, and that it can only be achieved if the state is predominantly guided by what sound reason tells us is useful to all men (ii, 21). His primary goal in the TP is to design a variety of constitutional arrangements which will achieve that end, or come as near doing so as possible, given the historical circumstances of the state in question.

Spinoza does not think there is just one way of designing the state which will work equally well in all situations. In the TTP he had expressed his preference for democracy as the most natural form of government, which best preserves the freedom and equality of the state of nature (xvi, 36). In the TP, even though it comes to an end before Spinoza has managed to say much about democracy, it's still clear that it's his preferred form of government. But like Machiavelli, whose political wisdom he greatly admires, he understands that the history of the state matters. If a people is used to living under a king, it will be hard to establish a republican form of government among

7. Cf. vi, 4, where he writes that "peace does not consist in the privation of war, but in a union *or* harmony of minds."

them.⁸ If they're used to living under a republican form of government, establishing autocratic rule will be difficult.⁹ The history of the state for which we're prescribing a constitution limits the kinds of constitution which might work in it.

So Spinoza prescribes different kinds of constitution for different kinds of situation. The bulk of the TP, and what's newest in it, by comparison with his previous work, is a detailed attempt to set out model constitutions for each of the three main forms of government: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. It's disappointing that Spinoza's work breaks off just as he's beginning to propose a model constitution for the kind of state most apt to interest us. But there's much to be grateful for in what he's left us. Though he did not live long enough to lay out a model constitution for democracy, what he says about the other forms of government provides important insights into what he thinks their defects are, and why he advocates popular government where possible.

ON MONARCHY AS THE LEAST DESIRABLE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

In certain historical circumstances monarchy may be the best solution to the problem of government. But Spinoza has little good to say about it. Its defenders argue, and experience may seem to show, that it's conducive to peace and harmony to confer all power on one man. "No state has stood so long without notable change as that of the Turks."¹⁰ Still, he says, "if slavery, barbarism, and being without protection are to be called peace, nothing is more wretched for men than peace." Autocratic rule, which does not require extended discussion to reach a decision, may seem more efficient than forms of government which require deliberation by a council. Spinoza quotes an ancient proverb: "While the Romans deliberate, Saguntum is lost," referring to the loss of a city in Spain to the Carthaginians in the First Punic War, traditionally attributed to the indecision of the Roman Senate. But he thinks this supposed advantage is illusory. Good decision-making requires consultation and discussion:

8. In the TTP Spinoza used the example of England to make this point. Cf. xviii, 28–37, and Machiavelli, *Discourses* i, 16, and iii, 3. For Spinoza's appreciation of Machiavelli, see TP v, 7.

9. Machiavelli, *The Prince* v.

10. TP vi, 4. "The Turks" refers to the Ottoman Empire, which in Spinoza's day was at the height of its power, and could easily seem a great success.

when the few decide everything, simply on the basis of their own affects, freedom and the common good are lost. For human wits are too sluggish to penetrate everything right away. But by asking advice, listening, and arguing, they're sharpened. When people try all means, in the end they find ways to the things they want which everyone approves, and no one had ever thought of before. (ix, 14)

The NS will add: "We've seen many examples of this in Holland." With the addition, this passage unites two important themes in Spinoza's political thought: the importance of discussion, and the importance of knowing our history.

The idea that one man alone can rule a state is an illusion (vi, 5). One man alone cannot know everything he needs to know about the conditions in his kingdom which require attention. He will need a council of advisors to tell him what's going on and suggest ways of dealing with the problems. And one man alone cannot see that all his decrees are enforced. As Hobbes emphasized in chapter 13 of *Leviathan*, the natural equality of men in their mental and physical faculties—the absence of decisive differences of power between them—makes it impossible for even the strongest and smartest man to establish a stable relation of domination over his fellows. The king cannot rule by fear of his personal power alone,¹¹ but will require an enforcement cadre, a group of people willing to obey without coercion his commands to force obedience on those not willing to obey without coercion, and large enough to be broadly successful in doing that. The need for an enforcement cadre puts *de facto* limits on his power. Being an enforcer can be a hazardous duty—more hazardous as popular resistance is greater—and even people who are generally willing to obey enforcement commands may hesitate to do some of the things they are told to do.

What's more, one man, seeking to rule alone, must fear his subjects.¹² He depends on his soldiers, not only for the enforcement of his commands, but also for his personal protection. Spinoza likes to cite a story from Tacitus, relating how Otho was able to displace Galba as emperor by suborning two members of his bodyguard.¹³ So what may

11. See vii, 12. This may not quite be true. Greg Kavka has argued (against Hume and others) that a regime in which the ruler is never obeyed except out of fear of punishment is theoretically possible. But he concedes that such a tyranny is likely to be quite unstable, and that real-world rulers have generally recognized this. (See Kavka 1986, 254–66.)

12. TP vii, 11. In vii, 14, Spinoza will quote (somewhat freely) an aphorism of Pérez: "The exercise of absolute power is very dangerous for kings, very hateful to their vassals, very offensive to God and to nature, as a thousand examples show" (Pérez 1644, 287). The thought also appears in TTP xvii, 8.

13. See Tacitus, *Histories* I, xxv, cited in TP vii, 14, and in the TTP ADN. XXXV, at xvii, 3.

appear to be the rule of one man is always, in fact, the rule of at least a few, pretending to be the rule of one (vi, 5).

Spinoza's remedy is to acknowledge the de facto situation by setting up a complex system of councils with legal rights which place formal limits on the powers of the king, creating what we would now call a constitutional monarchy. Simplifying considerably, there is to be a large, term-limited council, which can inform the king about conditions in his kingdom and give him advice about what needs to be done. Although the king makes the final decision, he is limited in his choices to the options the council offers him. A smaller council, selected from the large one, administers the policies the king has decided on. Yet another council, made up of jurists, administers justice. As a further protection against royal abuses of power, the army must consist only of citizens (vii, 17). There is to be no reliance on foreign mercenaries.¹⁴

ON ARISTOCRACY AS A BETTER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

In view of the care with which Spinoza built institutional limits on the power of the king into his model constitution for a monarchy, it comes as a surprise to find, in Chapter 8, that for aristocracies he favors a government whose power is as absolute as possible, on the ground, it seems, that the more absolute a government is, the better it is, and the more suitable for preserving freedom (viii, 7). His constitution for an aristocracy¹⁵ calls for government by a large Supreme Council, drawn from an even larger patrician class. In a state of moderate size Spinoza thinks that the Supreme Council needs to have at least five thousand members, that number being necessary to yield at least a hundred members who have outstanding ability and are capable of providing the Council with leadership. (It's clear that he does not have high expectations for the ability of his patricians.)

There are no institutional checks on the Supreme Council's power to make and repeal laws, appoint public servants, or choose those who will succeed to membership in the Council. What check there is on

14. This is a lesson Spinoza probably learned from Machiavelli. See, for example, the condemnation of mercenary troops as either worthless or dangerous, in chs. xii–xiii of *The Prince*.

15. To be more precise, Spinoza considers two different kinds of aristocracy: one in which the patricians are citizens of one city, which is the capital of the whole state (the models here are Rome, Venice, and Genoa), and one in which they are citizens of several cities, none of which is preeminent (the model being the Dutch Republic). Because the two kinds of aristocracy have different problems, Spinoza devotes separate chapters to each (chs. viii and ix). But the differences are not relevant to the points I wish to make, so I'll ignore them.

their power is just another council, called the Council of Syndics, drawn from the patricians, and serving for life, which oversees its actions, to make sure that the laws the Supreme Council has enacted are obeyed by the officers it appoints to implement them. So the Council of Syndics has only oversight powers. Spinoza also calls for a second subordinate council, drawn from the patrician class, and called “the Senate,” which has executive powers, including the power to declare war and peace (but subject to the approval of the Supreme Council). So the formal powers of the Supreme Council are very great, but not unlimited.

Spinoza’s statements about the powers of his model aristocracy can be confusing. In viii, 3, he says that rule by “a sufficiently large council is absolute, *or comes nearest to being absolute*” (my emphasis). This seems to mean that it comes as close to being absolute as possible, without actually being absolute. In the next paragraph he says that because the rule in an aristocracy of this kind never “returns to the multitude”—as it does in a monarchy, when the king dies (vii, 25)—and because there is “no consultation with the multitude in it . . . we must in every respect *regard* this aristocracy as absolute” (my emphasis.) I take this to mean: this may be how we must *think* of it, but it is not, strictly speaking, how it is. At the end of viii, 3, he had said, conditionally, that “*if there’s any absolute rule*, it’s really the rule which occurs when the whole multitude rules” (my emphasis). Later, introducing his discussion of democracy in Chapter 11, he drops the condition: “I come, finally, to the third, and completely absolute state, which we call Democratic” (xi, 1). So there is such a thing as absolute rule, but it’s not aristocratic (much less monarchic); it’s democratic.

This is apt to puzzle a twenty-first-century reader, who tends to associate absolutism with monarchy, and to think it’s a bad thing. But Spinoza wants to turn these normal assumptions on their head. His position is that, contrary to what we might unreflectively think, monarchy is inherently the least absolute form of government. Whatever formal powers the constitution may give the king, the possibility of discontent among his subjects, and the consequent threat of a coup or a rebellion, limits those powers. The more the power of the state is theoretically concentrated in one or a few men, the fewer the men it takes to overthrow the government. The constitution of a monarchy (or a small aristocracy) may permit the king (or the aristocratic council) to do things which the practicalities of politics do not allow. An “absolute” monarch will not have to stand for reelection; but in deciding what he can do without jeopardizing his rule, he must still take into account the distribution of power in his state and the views of his subjects about

their interests. The same would be true of an aristocracy in which power is concentrated in the hands of a small number of aristocrats.

In a large aristocracy, Spinoza thinks, these constraints are a much smaller problem than they are in a monarchy or a small aristocracy. A large aristocracy is better able to defend itself against a coup or a popular uprising and maintain the rule of law. That is, it is better able to maintain a situation in which the government is able to enforce rules governing the cooperation of the citizens, which it has arrived at by a procedure the citizens generally support. But even the power of a large aristocracy can never be completely absolute; the best it can do is to approach that condition. Even a large aristocracy must consider the people's reaction to its policies, and the possibility that they will rebel against the policies the government has approved. What Spinoza seems to mean, when he compares the different degrees of absoluteness in the different forms of government, is that a government will be more absolute the less its decisions are liable to be overruled or checked by some other body, whether that body is one to which the constitution has given a well-defined legal status, or simply an undisciplined multitude.

ON DEMOCRACY AS THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT

By this logic, the most absolute form of government should be a democracy, understood as that form of government in which a council made up of the whole citizenry rules.¹⁶ In a democracy everybody is part of the decision-making process, and there is no one on the outside, threatening to overturn the results if they don't like them. In a democracy, as Spinoza seems to conceive it, collective decisions are made by an orderly deliberative process, which the people as a whole accept and participate in. If good decision-making requires broadly based discussion, conducted in an orderly way, then a democracy has the least reason to fear a coup or popular rebellion, not merely because there it's the people themselves who rule, who are eligible to vote in the supreme council and to hold public office, but because everyone has had an opportunity to shape the final result, and has some grasp of the considerations which can be brought for and against a given policy. Accordingly, Spinoza characterizes democracy as the only completely absolute form of government.

This will surprise readers of the TTP, who may object that this way of thinking about democracy is much more optimistic about the wisdom

16. On the themes of this section, see the essays by Antonio Negri and Alexandre Matheron, in Montag and Stolze 1997.

of the common people than Spinoza seems to be in that work. In my translation the phrase “the common people” generally translates *vulgus*, and seems, typically, to have very negative connotations. At a minimum, the *vulgus* are not distinguished by great intelligence, learning, or moral excellence. Sometimes the negative connotations are stronger than that. The *vulgus* are ignorant, stupid, prejudiced, superstitious, governed more by their passions than by reason, easily swayed by rhetoric, stubborn, prone to interpret perversely what they read, hostile to philosophy and scientific inquiry, and given to wonder. How can we expect people like that to reach intelligent decisions, or even contribute anything intelligent to a discussion in which they’re participating?

But this characterization of the *vulgus* is drawn largely from the TTP. That term rarely occurs in the TP, where it tends to be replaced by terms like *multitudo* (multitude, in my translation), or *plebs* (ordinary people, or plebeians), or *populus* (people), whose connotations generally don’t seem to be nearly so negative. In fact, the only passage in the TP in which *vulgus* occurs (vii, 27) is one in which Spinoza defends the *vulgus* against the kinds of aspersion cast on them by the Roman historians who exercised such a strong influence on his political thinking! The common people have their faults, Spinoza admits, the same faults the classical historians accused them of. But those faults aren’t peculiar to any particular social class. They are faults common to humanity as a whole. And to some extent they can be remedied if the government shares with the people the information on which it bases its decisions.

The more serious problem with the line of thinking I have so far pursued is that it seems to assume an understanding of democracy which Spinoza in the end rejects. From everything I’ve said so far, we might suppose that he makes the distinction between the different forms of government in a pretty traditional way: monarchy is rule by one; aristocracy, rule by a relative few; and democracy rule by the many. Early in the TP that seemed to be the contrast he had in mind. There he wrote that if the responsibility for public affairs

is the business of a Council made up of the common multitude, then the State is called a *Democracy*; if the council is made up only of certain select people, it’s called an *Aristocracy*; and finally, if the responsibility for Public Affairs, and hence sovereignty, is vested in one person, it’s called a *Monarchy*. (ii, 17)

But later in the TP he makes the distinction between aristocracy and democracy differently. In TP viii, 1, and xi, 1–2, it appears that a democracy is a form of government in which eligibility for the governing

body is a matter of legal right, not of choices made by the existing members of that body. Aristocracy is a form of government in which membership in the ruling council is determined, not by law, but by the choice of the members of the existing body.

Now Spinoza never says who is supposed to make the laws which define the criteria determining who is eligible for the governing body in a democracy. This seems to me a serious, and perhaps irremediable, flaw in his argument. He does suggest a number of different criteria the law might in principle prescribe: being born to citizens, or being born on the country's soil, or having served the republic well, etc. The law might make the criteria for managing the business of the state very inclusive or it might make them very exclusive. It might allow only older men who have reached a certain age to have a share in ruling, or eldest sons as soon as they reach the age of majority, or people who have paid a certain sum of money to the state, and so on. Depending on the criteria by which citizens acquire this right, it might be enjoyed by many or by only a few. If only a few have it, the choices made in an aristocracy might result in a much larger governing body than the one you might expect from the operation of the laws in a democracy.

Spinoza is aware of this possible consequence and accepts it:

The result of such a law could be that the supreme Council [in a Democracy] is composed of fewer citizens than the Council of an Aristocratic state of the kinds we've discussed. (xi, 2)

He sees that this feature of democracy may make it seem inferior to an aristocracy, but he replies that it won't be, because he thinks the choices aristocrats would make, when they add members to their council, will generally favor the rich, or their relatives, or their friends, or some other group of people not chosen on the basis of merit. He thinks history has shown this, and he may well be right about that, though his defense of democracy would be more persuasive if we knew that the criterion for rule in a democracy was one which did favor people of merit.

That, however, is a question he deliberately leaves open:

We can conceive different kinds of Democratic state. I don't plan to discuss each one, but only one in which absolutely everyone who is bound only by the laws of his native land, and who is, furthermore, his own master and lives honorably, has the right to vote in the supreme Council and to stand for political offices. (xi, 3)

This will exclude resident aliens (arguably reasonable enough), and also, it seems, criminals and people who have disgraced themselves (xi, 1, 3).

Without knowing more about these stipulations—do we make distinctions between different kinds of crime, treating some as more disqualifying than others? who defines what constitutes a disqualifying disgrace and determines that someone's conduct has fallen afoul of that rule?—it's hard to know how reasonable these exclusions are. The condition that someone must be his own master evidently excludes servants (quaint in our more democratic times), children and students (arguably reasonable, if they are below a certain age), and of course, women (a great embarrassment, nowadays, to most of those who would otherwise think of Spinoza as a wise and good man).

I do not propose to discuss any further the merits of these exclusions. I will simply close by pointing out that the more groups a democracy excludes from eligibility for its governing body, the smaller its base of support is. If the size of the governing body and the class of people from whom it is drawn is supposed to give it more protection from coups or popular rebellions than the governing body in an aristocracy would have, and if this is the key to its being the most absolute form of government, and if being absolute is such a desirable feature in a form of government, then having a smaller governing body would deprive democracy of its chief advantage over aristocracy. Perhaps Spinoza would have found good answers to the questions his political philosophy raises, if he had lived long enough to work them out. But it is difficult to see what they would have been.

Political Treatise

*DEMONSTRATING HOW A STATE¹ MUST BE SET UP,
WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS MONARCHIC,
OR WHEN AN ELITE RULE,
SO THAT IT DOESN'T DECLINE INTO A TYRANNY
AND THE PEACE AND SECURITY² OF THE CITIZENS
ARE PRESERVED³*

CHAPTER I

*[Introduction]*⁴

1. Philosophers conceive the affects by which we're torn as vices, which
5 men fall into by their own fault. That's why they usually laugh at them,
weep over them, censure them, or (if they want to seem particularly holy)
curse them. They believe they perform a godly act and reach the pinnacle
of wisdom when they've learned how to praise in many ways a human
10 nature which doesn't exist anywhere, and how to bewail the way men
really are. They conceive men not as they are, but as they want them to
be. That's why for the most part they've written Satire instead of Ethics,
and why they've never conceived a Politics which could be put to any
15 practical application, but only one which would be thought a Fantasy,
possible only in Utopia, or in the golden age of the Poets, where there'd
be absolutely no need for it.⁵ In all the sciences which have a practical

1. NS: *een Staat*. OP: *Societas*.

2. NS: *Veiligheid*. OP: *Libertas*. Cf. i, 6; vii, 15.

3. Francès argued (Pléiade 1485–88) that this subtitle, which also appears on the title page, should be attributed to the editors of the OP. Perhaps not all of her arguments are convincing (cf. Dominguez 1986b, 74). But the conclusion seems right. Most of the language of the subtitle is drawn from Letter 84. Since I am persuaded by Akkerman (1980, 272–73) that the unnamed addressee of Letter 84 was probably Jarig Jelles, and that Letter 84 was probably written in Dutch, and translated into Latin for the OP by Meyer, I take the NS version of that letter to be the one to translate, noting places where the OP varies significantly.

4. This title is supplied from Letter 84.

5. This introductory chapter is reminiscent of Machiavelli, with its emphasis on the need for realism about human nature. Cf. the praise at v, 7, and x, 1, with *The Prince*, xv,

application, Theory is believed to be out of harmony with Practice. But this is especially true in Politics. No men are thought less suitable to
 25 guide Public Affairs than Theorists, *or* Philosophers.

2. By contrast, Political Practitioners are thought more inclined to set traps for men than to look after their interests. They're judged to be shrewd rather than wise. Experience, of course, has taught them
 [III/274] that as long as there are men, there will be vices.⁶ So they try to anticipate men's wickedness, using the arts experience and long practice have taught them, arts men usually practice more from fear than because they're guided by reason. In this way they seem to be opposed to Religion—especially to the Theologians, who believe the supreme
 5 'powers ought to treat the public business by the same rules of Piety private men are bound by.⁷ Still, there can't be any doubt that Political Practitioners have written much more successfully about Political affairs than Philosophers have. Since they've had experience as their teacher, they've taught nothing remote from practice.

10 3. I am fully persuaded that experience has shown all the kinds of State which might conceivably enable men to live in harmony, as well as the means by which a multitude ought to be directed, *or* restrained within definite limits.⁸ So I don't believe reflection on this subject can come up with anything not completely at variance with experience, *or*
 15 practice, which hasn't yet been learned and tested by experience. Men are so constituted that they can't live without some common law. But

or the *Discourses* I, iii. Spinoza had a copy of More's *Utopia* in his library, and no doubt has him in mind as an example of a theoretician. This may be unfair to More, who had served for more than ten years in Parliament before he wrote *Utopia*, and had a largely successful career in politics, rising to be a Privy Councillor, Speaker of the House, and ultimately Lord Chancellor of England, before his conflict with Henry VIII led to his execution. Some themes in this paragraph repeat the ideas of the Preface to Part III of the *Ethics*. The reference to the golden age of the poets recalls Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (I, 89ff.), among other possibilities. For a close analysis of the first two sections of this chapter, emphasizing its relation to Aquinas, see Matheron 1978.

6. Cf. Tacitus, *Histories* IV, lxxiv, 2. It's ironic that Spinoza, so often characterized as an a priori theorist, should put as much emphasis as he does on arguments from experience generally, and history in particular. Cf. vii, 14, 17.

7. Wernham cites a line from Machiavelli which we might translate: "a republic and a people are governed differently than a private citizen." Contrast Erasmus: "What must be implanted deeply and before all else in the mind of the prince is the best possible understanding of Christ. He should be constantly absorbing his teachings. . . . Let him become convinced of this, that what Christ teaches applies to no one more than to the prince." Erasmus, *Education*, 13. As early as Boccaccio (*Decameron* I, ix), Renaissance authors questioned whether we would want our rulers to act as the gospels seem to dictate (the issue in that case being whether a ruler should patiently suffer wrongs done to himself or to those within his territories).

8. Spinoza has been criticized for assuming that there are only three kinds of state to be considered, but this is an assumption he shares with both Hobbes (*Leviathan* xix, 1) and Tacitus (*Annales* IV, xxxiii) (Proietti).

the men who've discussed and established the common laws and public affairs were very acute (whether cunning or shrewd). So it's hardly credible that we can conceive anything potentially useful for Society as a whole which circumstances, *or* chance, haven't suggested, and which
 20 men—keenly attentive to their common affairs and looking after their own security—have not seen.⁹

4. So when I applied my mind to Politics, I didn't intend to advance anything new or unheard of, but only to demonstrate the things which
 25 agree best with practice, in a certain and indubitable way, and¹⁰ to deduce them from the condition of human nature. To investigate the matters pertaining to this science with the same freedom of spirit we're accustomed to use in investigating Mathematical subjects, I took great pains not to laugh at human actions, or mourn them, or curse them,
 30 but only to understand them. So I've contemplated human affects—like love, hate, anger, envy, love of esteem, compassion, and the other emotions—not as vices of human nature, but as properties which pertain to it in the same way heat, cold, storms, thunder, etc., pertain to the nature of the air. Though these things are inconvenient, they're still necessary, and have definite causes, through which we strive to understand their
 [III/275] nature.¹¹ The Mind rejoices in contemplating them truly just as much as it does in knowing things pleasing to the senses.

5. For these things are certain (and we've demonstrated them in our *Ethics*): men are necessarily subject to affects [E IV P4C];¹² they're so
 5 constituted that they pity those whose affairs are going badly, and envy those who are prospering [E III P32S]; they're more inclined to vengeance than to mercy [E IV App. xiii]; moreover, everyone wants others to live according to his mentality [E V P4S], so that they approve what he approves, and reject what he rejects [E III P31C]. Since everyone
 10 wants to be first, they fall into quarrels and try as hard as they can to

9. Zac compares the similar thought in Aristotle, *Politics* 1264a1–5.

10. OP: *aut*, or. NS: *en*, and. Gebhardt follows the OP, but Wernham and Proietti, rightly, I think, emend on the basis of the NS. Spinoza will reiterate the idea of deducing his conclusions from human nature in i, 7; iii, 18; and vii, 2.

11. Cf. Hobbes: "The science of establishing and preserving commonwealths has definite and infallible rules, no less than arithmetic and geometry." *Leviathan* xx, 19. See also Machiavelli, *Discourses* I, xxxix, for the assumption that because human nature always involves the same affects, we can use our knowledge of the past to predict what problems are apt to arise, and how we can deal with them. But as Zac observes, Spinoza, unlike Machiavelli, has the notion of organizing his theory of human nature into a deductive system. And he finds joy in understanding the truth scientifically, even if the truth is unpleasant.

12. The bracketed references in this paragraph have been suggested by several previous editors. If the first is correct, then Spinoza is somewhat careless of the distinction between *affectus* and *passio*. Cf. E IV P37S2, II/237/29. But as Moreau noted, regarding TP i, 1, there is no discussion of active affects in the TP.

crush each other. Whoever turns out to be the winner prides himself more on harming the loser than on doing good for himself [E IV P58S]. Though everyone is persuaded that Religion teaches each person to love his neighbor as himself—i.e., that he should defend his neighbor's right as
 15 he would his own—still, we've shown that this persuasion has little power against the affects [E IV P15]. It's strong, of course, at the point of death, when illness has conquered the affects and the man lies wasting away. It's strong also in houses of worship, where men conduct no business. But it has no weight in the marketplace or the court, where we need it most.
 20 Moreover, though we've shown that reason can do much to restrain and moderate the affects [E V P1–P10S], we've also seen that the path reason teaches us to follow is very difficult [E V P42S]. So people who persuade themselves that a multitude, which may be divided over public affairs, can be induced to live only according to the prescription of reason, those people are dreaming of the golden age of the Poets.
 25 They're captive to a myth.

6. So, a state whose well-being depends on someone's good faith, and whose affairs can't be properly looked after unless the people who handle them are willing to act in good faith, won't be stable at all. For it to be able to last, its affairs must be so ordered that, whether the
 30 people who administer them are led by reason or by an affect, they can't be induced to be disloyal *or*¹³ to act badly. It doesn't make any difference to the security of the state in what spirit men are led to administer matters properly, provided they do administer them properly. For freedom of mind, *or* strength of character, is a private virtue. But the virtue of the state is security.¹⁴

7. Finally, because all men everywhere, whether Barbarians or civi-
 [III/276] lized, combine their practices and form some sort of civil order, we must seek the causes¹⁵ and natural foundations of the state, not from the teachings of reason, but from the common nature, *or* condition, of men,¹⁶ which I've decided to do in the following chapter.¹⁷

13. The OP and Gebhardt read *ceu* here, but the NS has *of* (= *seu*), which most editors agree is right. Gebhardt (V, 134) calls attention to a passage in De la Court's *Polityke Weeg-schaal*, which warns in similar terms against assuming, in designing a political system, that the rulers will be virtuous (Van Hove 1661, 138).

14. Perhaps Spinoza is here trying to resolve the tension in the TTP between iii, 20, and xx, 12. It will resurface in TP v, 2 and 5.

15. The OP, Gebhardt, and Proietti all read *causas*. But Wernham and Bartuschat are surely correct to read *causae*.

16. Cf. vi, 1.

17. Wernham comments that here Spinoza abandons his "original belief in an historical social contract," found in TTP xvi, 12–28. The only contract he sees in the TP is a contract of government (iv, 6). See the extended discussion of this topic in Matheron 1969, 307–30, supplemented by Matheron 1990.

[III/276]

CHAPTER II

[On Natural Right]¹

1. In our *Theological-Political Treatise* we treated both Natural Right and Civil Right, and in our *Ethics* we explained what sin, merit, justice, injustice, and finally, human freedom are.² But so that the readers of this treatise won't need to look elsewhere for the things which most
 10 concern it, I've resolved to explain them again here, and to demonstrate them rigorously.³

2. Any natural thing whatever can be conceived adequately, whether it exists or not.⁴ So just as the beginning of a natural thing's existence
 15 can't be inferred from its definition, neither can its perseverance in existing. For the ideal essence of these things is the same after they've begun to exist as it was before. So as their beginning to exist can't follow from their essence, neither can their perseverance in existing.
 20 The same power they require to begin to exist, they also require to continue to exist. From this it follows that the power by which natural things exist, and so by which they have effects, can't be anything but the eternal power of God itself.⁵ For if it were any other created power, it couldn't preserve itself, and so couldn't preserve natural things. The
 25 same power it would require to be created, it would also require to persevere in existing.

3. From this fact—that the power of natural things, by which they exist and have effects, is the very power of God—we easily understand what the Right of nature is. For since God has the right over all things,
 30 and God's right is nothing but his power itself, insofar as [his power] is considered to be absolutely free, it follows that each natural thing has as much right by nature as it has power to exist and have effects. For

1. Supplied from Letter 84.

2. See TTP xvi, 2–11, 40–42; E IV P37S2, IV PP67–73, V P1–P20S. Spinoza may give the impression that this chapter merely summarizes his previous work with respect to these topics. But on some topics he clearly goes beyond anything he had said earlier (e.g., in his discussion of sin in §6).

3. As elsewhere in Spinoza, producing an argument he conceives as demonstrative does not require the formal apparatus of a Euclidean demonstration.

4. Proietti refers us to E I P24 for the first three sentences of this paragraph. The phrase *essentia idealis* does not occur there (or anywhere else in the *Ethics*). In the texts included in Volume I it occurs explicitly only in Letter 17 (IV/77/9–78/14). Zac suggests that Letter 9 may also be helpful in understanding Spinoza's concept of an ideal essence.

5. This was a recurrent theme in the TTP. Cf. i, 44 and the passages cited there.

[III/277] the power of each natural thing, by which it exists and has effects, is nothing but the very power of God, which is absolutely free.

4. By the Right of nature, then, I understand the laws of nature themselves, *or* the rules according to which all things happen, i.e., the very power
 5 of nature.⁶ So the natural Right of the whole of nature, and as a result, of each individual, extends as far as its power does. Hence, whatever each man does according to the laws of his nature, he does with the supreme right of nature. He has as much right over nature as he has power.⁷

5. Therefore, if human nature were so constituted that men lived
 10 only according to the prescription of reason, and did not strive for anything else, the Right of nature, insofar as it is considered a peculiar property of the human race, would be determined only by the power of reason. But men are led more by blind desire than by reason.⁸ So
 15 the natural power, *or* Right, of men ought to be defined not by reason, but by whatever appetite determines them to act and to strive to preserve themselves.

For my part I admit that the desires which don't arise from reason are not so much human actions as passions.⁹ But because we're dealing
 20 here with the universal power *or* Right of nature, we can recognize no difference here between the desires generated in us by reason and those generated by other causes. Both kinds of desire are effects of nature and display the natural force by which man strives to persevere

6. Cf. Grotius: "natural right is the dictate of right reason, indicating that some act has either moral turpitude or moral necessity in it, arising from its disagreement or agreement with man's rational and social nature, and hence has been forbidden or commanded by God" (Grotius 1625/2005, I, i, 10). Hobbes' definition avoids any obviously moral notions: it is "a liberty each man hath to use his own power, as he will himself, for the preservation of his own nature . . . and consequently, of doing anything which, in his own judgment and reason he shall conceive to be the aptest means thereunto" (*Leviathan* xiv, 1). Hobbes thinks the striving for self-preservation is necessary (and hence, not reprehensible). Cf. DC i, 7. In Spinoza this is generalized to anything we do in consequence of the laws of nature, i.e., anything we do.

7. The argument of TP ii, 3–4 reprises that of TTP xvi, 3–4, with interesting variations. See Matheron 1985, 1986, both reprinted in Matheron 2011. It's natural to compare Spinoza's thought here with that of Hobbes (e.g., in DC i, 14; *Leviathan* xxxi, 5), though there are notable differences: Hobbes does not make the Spinozistic assumption that the power of natural things is the power of God; he does not extend his conclusions about natural right to everything in nature; he does emphasize that men are by nature so equal in power, that there can be no dominion in the state of nature (*Leviathan* xiii, 1); and he operates with a different conception of natural law, as a "dictate of right reason" concerning the means to self-preservation (DC ii, 1; *Leviathan* xiv, 3). Spinoza, by contrast, speaks of the laws of the individual's nature, presumably thinking of these as following from the more general laws of human nature outlined in E III (in conjunction with facts about the constitution and history of *this* individual).

8. An allusion to Juvenal X, 351, to be repeated in ii, 6 (Proietti).

9. Ramond notes that this is the only occurrence in the TP of the term *passio*.

in his being.¹⁰ Whether a man is wise or ignorant, he's a part of nature, and whatever determines him to act must be referred to the power of nature, insofar as it can be defined by the nature of this or that man.¹¹ Whether a man is led by reason or only by desire, he does nothing except according to the laws and rules of nature, i.e. (by §4), in accordance with the right of nature.

6. Most people, though, believe that the ignorant disturb the order of nature rather than follow it, and they conceive men in nature as a dominion within a dominion.¹² For they maintain that the human Mind was not produced by any natural causes, but was created immediately by God, so independent of other things that it has an absolute 'power [III/278] to determine itself and to use reason properly. But experience teaches all too well that it's no more in our 'power to have a sound Mind than it is to have a sound Body.¹³

Again, since each thing, as far as it can, strives to preserve its being, we can't doubt that if it were as much in our 'power to live according to the prescription of reason as it is to be led by blind desire, everyone would be led by reason and organize his life wisely. But this is far from true. Everyone is carried away by his own pleasure.¹⁴

The Theologians¹⁵ don't remove this difficulty when they claim that the cause of this weakness is a vice of human nature, *or* a sin, which had its origin in the fall of our first ancestor.¹⁶ For if it was indeed in the 'power of the first man either to stand firm or to fall, and if he was in possession of his faculties and unimpaired in his nature, how could it have happened that he fell, knowingly, and with eyes open?

10. Cf. Cicero, *De finibus* III, 5–6, IV, 7; Diogenes Laertius VII, 85; and Augustine, *City of God* XI, xxvii.

11. Cf. E IV P4.

12. Cf. E III Pref.; V, Pref.

13. Alluding to Juvenal X, 356.

14. Another allusion to Virgil's *Eclogues* ii, 65, also cited in TTP xvi, 22.

15. The doctrines attributed to the Theologians here—that as originally created by God, man had the power, if he chose, to live according to reason, that he lost that power by his disobedience, that he disobeyed because the Devil (through Eve) deceived him, that the Devil was good by nature, but was made evil by his own fault, and that as a result of Adam's sin, it became impossible for his progeny not to sin—go back at least to Augustine. Gebhardt (V, 134–35) notes that Spinoza owned a sixteenth-century epitome of Augustine's works, from which his account of Augustine's teaching was probably derived. Modern readers may find it more convenient to consult Augustine, *The City of God*, Bks. XI–XIV (included in Augustine 1990). Gebhardt identifies Calvin as a second theologian who held views of the kind Spinoza criticizes. Cf. his *Institutes* (I, i, 1; xv; II, i, ii). The Dutch Reformed Church embraced these views at the Synod of Dort. See the *Canons of the Synod of Dort* (*Creeds and Confessions of Faith* II, 583–88).

16. Spinoza has previously discussed the fall in Letter 19 (Volume I, 357–61), E IV P68S, and TTP ii, 32, iv, 26–27, and 38–39.

15 They say he was deceived by the Devil. But who deceived the Devil? Who, I ask, made that most excellent of all intelligent creatures so insane that he wanted to be greater than God? Wasn't he striving, as far as was in his power, to preserve himself (who had a sound Mind) and his being?¹⁷

20 Again, how could it have happened that the very first man, who was of sound mind and the master of his will, was seduced and underwent the loss of his mental faculties? If he had the 'power to use reason correctly, he could not be deceived. He necessarily strove, as far as he could, to preserve his being and keep his Mind sound. But it's sup-
25 posed that he had this in his 'power. So he must have kept his Mind sound and could not be deceived. The story of [the first man] shows that this is false. So it must be acknowledged that it wasn't in the first man's 'power to use reason correctly. Like us, he was subject to affects.

7. Moreover, no one can deny that man, like all other individuals,
30 strives, as far as he can, to preserve his being. If some difference could be conceived here, it would have to arise from the fact that man has free will. But the more we conceive man to be free, the more we are forced to maintain that he must necessarily preserve himself and be in
[III/279] possession of his faculties. Anyone who doesn't confuse freedom with contingency will easily grant me this.¹⁸ For freedom is a virtue, *or* perfection. So whatever convicts man of weakness can't be related to his freedom. A man can't be called free on the grounds that he can *not*
5 exist, or that he can *not* use reason; only insofar as he has the 'power to exist and have effects, according to the laws of human nature, can he be called free. So the more we consider a man to be free, the less can we say that he can fail to use reason and choose evils in preference to goods.

That's why God, who exists, understands, and has effects, all with
10 absolute freedom, also exists, understands, and has effects necessarily, i.e., from the necessity of his own nature.¹⁹ For there's no doubt that God has effects with the same freedom with which he exists. Therefore, as he exists in accordance with the necessity of his nature, so also he acts in accordance with the necessity of his nature. I.e., he acts absolutely freely.

8. We conclude, then, that it's not in anyone's 'power to always use
15 reason and be at the highest peak of human freedom²⁰—but that nevertheless everyone always strives, so far as he can, to preserve his being.

17. For an earlier discussion of the Devil, see KV II, xxv.

18. Cf. Letter 21, to Blijenbergh, IV/130.

19. Cf. E I D7, P17C and S.

20. *Concludimus itaque, in potestate uniuscuiusque hominis non esse ratione semper uti, & in summo humanae libertatis fastigio esse.* Translations vary. Some take it to say that *not*

We also conclude that (because everyone has as much right as he has power) what each man strives for and does, whether he is wise or foolish, he strives for and does by the supreme right of nature. From
 20 these considerations, it follows that the Right and established practice of nature, under which all men are born and for the most part live, prohibits nothing except what no one desires and no one can do; it does not prohibit disputes, or hatreds, or anger, or deceptions, and it is absolutely not averse to anything appetite urges.

25 This is not surprising. For nature is not restrained by the laws of human reason [alone], which aim only at men's true advantage and preservation, but [also] by infinitely many other [laws],²¹ which are concerned with the eternal order of the whole of nature, of which man is a small part. It's only in accordance with the necessity of this eternal order that all individuals are determined to exist and produce effects in
 30 a definite way. So whenever something in nature seems to us ridiculous, absurd, or evil, that comes from the fact that we know things only in part, and are for the most part ignorant of the order and coherence of the whole of nature, and that we want everything to be directed in accordance with what our reason prescribes, even though what reason
 35 says is evil is not evil in relation to the order and laws of nature as a whole, but only in relation to the laws of our nature.²²

[III/280] 9. Moreover, it follows that each person is subject to someone else's control so long as he is under the other person's 'power, and that he

everyone has the power to *consistently* be guided by reason. That would allow that many (perhaps even most people) might have it. I don't think Spinoza was that optimistic about our capacity for rationality. I take it (in agreement, I think, with Wernham) that Spinoza thinks *no one* has that power. On my reading, the most he would grant is that some people (probably only a few) are *predominantly* guided by reason, but that even those people are not consistently rational. Most people most of the time are ruled by their affects. I take this to be Spinoza's ground for thinking that in every age virtue is extremely rare. See TTP Pref., 14, and xii, 7; and TP ii, 6, and 18, and vi, 6. Cf. E IV, App. vii, xxxii. But this is optimistic by comparison with what some theologians hold. For Spinoza good men may be rare, but they do exist. For Calvin, on the other hand, fallen man is so corrupt that he can do no good. His reason is not so weak that it cannot distinguish between good and evil, but his will is so much a slave to wicked desires that it cannot strive for anything right. All human desires are evil. See *Institutes* II, i, 8, 9; ii, 12; III, iii, 12. Doctrines of this kind have a long history in the Christian tradition, going back at least to Paul's letter to the Romans. See particularly 3:9–18 and 7:14–25. The first of these passages consists of numerous quotations from the Hebrew Bible, so the doctrines are not peculiarly Christian. Note, though, that recent interpretations of Paul emphasize more positive aspects of his thought. See Stendahl 1963 or Sanders 1977. It is not obvious that Paul is consistent. In Curley 2015b I've argued that he may have evolved, and that Romans may represent a later, more pessimistic view than earlier letters.

21. *in finitis aliis*. The NS supplies *dingen* (= *rebus*, things) here, but it seems that it would be more precise to understand *legibus*.

22. For an alternate presentation of the argument of this paragraph, cf. TTP xvi, 7–11.

is his own master so long as he can fend off every force and avenge an injury done to him, as seems good to him, and absolutely, insofar
 5 as he can live according to his own mentality.

10. One person has another in his 'power [a] if he has him tied up, or [b] if he has taken away his arms and means of defending himself or escaping, or [c] if he has instilled fear in him, or [d] if he has so bound him to himself by a benefit that the other person would rather conduct himself according to his benefactor's wishes than according to his own, and wants to live according to his benefactor's opinion, not
 10 according to his own. Someone who has another person in his 'power in the first or second of these ways possesses only his Body, not his Mind. If he has him in his 'power in the third or fourth way, then he has made both his Mind and his Body subject to his control—but only while the fear or hope lasts. When either of these is taken away, the other person remains his own master.²³

15 11. A person's faculty of judging can also be subject to someone else's control insofar as the other person can deceive him. From this it follows that a Mind is completely its own master just to the extent that it can use reason rightly.²⁴ Indeed, because we ought to reckon human power not so much by the strength of the Body as by the strength
 20 of the Mind, it follows that people are most their own masters when they can exert the most power with their reason, and are most guided by reason. So I call a man completely free just insofar as he is guided by reason, because to that extent he is determined to action by causes which can be understood adequately through his own nature alone,
 25 even though they determine him to act necessarily. For (as shown in §7), freedom does not take away the necessity of acting. It assumes it.

12. An assurance given to someone by which someone has promised only in words that he will do something he could legitimately omit doing, or conversely [i.e., an assurance given where someone has promised not to do something he could legitimately do], remains valid just as long as the will of the person who has given the assurance does not
 30 change. For if he retains the 'power to cancel his assurance, he really hasn't surrendered his right; he's only given words. So if this person, who, by the Right of nature, is his own judge, has judged—whether rightly or wrongly (for since he's human, he may have erred)—that the

23. Proietti notes a number of allusions in this passage to Terence (particularly to his *Brothers*). Zac suggests that we should read this passage with Spinoza's psychological analysis of superstition in mind (TTP Pref., esp. §§1–11), that Spinoza would think rulers (or those who aspired to rule) could enslave their followers by manipulating their willingness to accept superstitious beliefs.

24. Cf. Hobbes, DC I, vii; TTP, ADN. XXXIII, at III/195; and TTP xx, 4.

assurance he gave will lead to more harm than good, he will think, in his own mind, that he ought to cancel his assurance. And by the Right of nature (by §9) he will cancel it.²⁵

[III/281] 13. If two men make an agreement with one another and join forces, they can do more together, and hence, together have more right over nature, than either does alone. The more connections they've formed in this way, the more right they'll all have together.²⁶

5 14. Insofar as men are tormented by anger, envy, or some affect of hatred, they're pulled in different directions and contrary to one another. For that reason they're more to be feared the more they can do, and the more shrewd and cunning they are than other animals.²⁷ And because (as we said in i, 5) men are by nature subject to these affects
10 most of the time, they are by nature enemies.²⁸ For my greatest enemy is the one I most have to fear and most have to be on guard against.

15 15. Moreover, since (by §9) everyone in the state of nature is his own master just as long as he can prevent others from overpowering him, and since it's futile for one person alone to try to protect himself from all others, it follows that as long as human natural right is determined by each person's power, and belongs to that person, there's no human natural right. It consists more in opinion than in fact, since there's no secure way to maintain it.²⁹

20 What's more, it's certain that each person can do that much less, and so has that much less right, the greater the cause he has for fear.³⁰ To this we may add that men can hardly sustain their lives and cultivate their minds without mutual aid.³¹

25 So we conclude that the Right of nature which is a peculiar property of the human race can hardly be conceived except where men have common rights and are jointly able to claim for themselves³² lands they

25. Cf. Hobbes, DCv I, ix, II, vii, xi; *Leviathan* xiv, 15, 18, xv, 5; TTP xvi, 15–20. On some of the difficulties regarding Spinoza's treatment of promises, see Garrett 1990.

26. PR compare *Leviathan* x, 3, and E IV P18S. Both these passages contain the thought that individuals can increase their power by joining forces; neither includes the thought that the right of a collective is proportional to the combined power of its members.

27. Cf. E IV App. x.

28. Cf. Hobbes, DCv I, xii.

29. Cf. Hobbes, DCv I, x–xi; X, i.

30. A theme which will come back, generalized to the state, at iii, 9.

31. Spinoza's initial discussion of the benefits of forming a social order in TTP iii, 13–14, had emphasized its necessity as a means to living securely. Returning to the topic in TTP v, 18–20, he stressed the economic advantages of living in a social order and its necessity for the cultivation of the arts and sciences, critical means to the perfection of our nature. (This was not sufficient to prevent Steno from criticizing him for making everything about security. See IV/292.)

32. Reading *vindicare* for the OP's *vindicare* at III/281/25, as suggested by Akkerman, Proietti, and Cristofolini.

can inhabit and cultivate, are able to protect themselves, fend off any force, and live according to the common opinion of all. For (by §13) the more they agree as one in this way, the more right they all have together. If this is the reason the Scholastics want to say that man is a
 30 social animal³³—because in the state of nature men can hardly be their own masters—I have nothing to say against them.

16. Where men have common rights, and all are led as if by one mind,³⁴ it's certain (by §13) that each of them has that much less right in proportion as the rest of them together are more powerful than he
 [III/282] is—that is, he really has no right over nature beyond what the common right grants him. For the rest, whatever he's commanded to do according to the common agreement, he's bound to carry out—or (by §4) is rightly compelled to do.

17. This right, which is defined by the power of a multitude, is usually called *Sovereignty*.³⁵ Whoever, by common agreement, has responsibility for public Affairs—that is, the rights of making, interpreting, and repealing laws, fortifying cities, and making decisions about war and peace, etc.—has this right absolutely.³⁶ If this responsibility is the business of a Council made up of the common multitude, then the
 10 State is called a *Democracy*; if the council is made up only of certain select people, it's called an *Aristocracy*; and finally, if the responsibility for Public Affairs, and hence sovereignty, is vested in one person, it's called a *Monarchy*.

18. From what we've shown in this Chapter, it becomes clear to us that in the state of nature there's no sin³⁷—or if anyone sins, he
 15 sins against himself, not anyone else. No one is bound by the Law of

33. See, for example, various passages in Aquinas: SCG IIIb, 85, 117, 129, 131, 147; ST I-II, Q 61, A 5; Q 72, A 4; Q 95, A 4; Q 109, A 3. The idea apparently originates in Aristotle, *Politics* I, ii, though Seneca (*De clementia* I, iii, 2; *De beneficiis* VII, i, 7) is also an important source for the scholastics. It occurs in Calvin (*Institutes* II, ii, 13), but is challenged in Hobbes, DCv I, ii; V, v. See also Spinoza's discussion in E IV P35S.

34. The first occurrence of language which will be central to the political theory of this work. Gebhardt (V, 139) traced its origin back to words attributed to Asinius Gallus in Tacitus (*Annals* I, xii), where Gallus is supposed to have argued, after Augustus' death, that Tiberius should assume all the powers Augustus had wielded, because the state needs to be ruled by one mind. Tiberius expressed doubt about his ability to do that. What distinguishes Spinoza's characteristic formula is the "as if" (*veluti*). He doesn't think it desirable, or even possible, for the affairs of the state to be entrusted entirely to one man (vi, 3–7). But he thinks it highly desirable for them to be conducted *as if* by one mind. Cf. ii, 15–16, 21; iii, 2, 5, 7; iv, 1; vi, 1; viii, 6, 19.

35. As Ramond notes, this paragraph demonstrates the ambiguity of *imperium*. In its first occurrence, translated "sovereignty," it designates a kind of right. In its second, translated "state," it is used to classify the different forms of government.

36. Cf. Hobbes, DCv vi, 18; *Leviathan* xviii, 16.

37. Cf. Hobbes, DCv xiv, xvi–xvii; *Leviathan* xiii, 10; E IV P37S2.

nature to conduct himself according to another person's wishes if he doesn't want to, or to regard anything as good or evil, except what he himself, according to his own mentality, decides is good or evil. And absolutely, the Law of nature prohibits nothing except what no one can do (see §§5 and 8).

20 Sin is an action which can't rightly be done. If men were bound by the established practice of nature to be guided by reason, everyone would necessarily be guided by reason.³⁸ For the established practices of nature are the established practices of God (by §§2 and 3). God established them with the same freedom with which he exists. So these things follow from the necessity of the divine nature (see §7). They're
25 eternal and can't be violated. But men are mostly guided by appetite without reason. They don't disturb the order of nature; they necessarily follow it. So the ignorant and weak-minded are no more bound by the Law of nature to organize their lives wisely than a sick man is bound to have a sound Body.

19. Sin, then, can be conceived only in a State, i.e., where the common law of the whole state decides what's good and what's evil, and where (by §16) no one acts rightly unless he acts in accordance with the common decree or agreement. For (as we said in the preceding section) sin is what can't be done rightly, *or* what's prohibited by law.
[III/283] And obedience is a constant will to do what by law is good and what the common decree says ought to be done.

20. But we're also accustomed to call sin what's contrary to the dictate of sound reason, and obedience, a constant will to moderate our
5 appetites according to the prescription of reason. I would completely approve of this, if human freedom consisted in not restraining our appetites, and the dominion of reason was bondage. But because human freedom is greater the more a man can be led by reason and control his appetites, it's only very improperly that we can call a rational life
10 obedience and sin what's really a weakness of Mind (and not a lack of restraint against oneself). Sin is more a ground for calling a man a slave than for calling him free. See §§7 and 11.

21. But because reason teaches us to practice piety, and to be of a good and peaceful disposition, which can happen only in a state—and
15 moreover, because a multitude can't be led as if by one mind, as is required in a state, unless the state has laws established according to the prescription of reason—it's not so improper for men who've become accustomed to live in a state to call something a sin if it's contrary to the dictate of reason. For the best states should have established their

38. Cf. TTP xvi, 7–11.

20 laws according to reason's dictate.³⁹ As for my saying (in §18) that, if a man sins at all in a state of nature, he sins against himself, see iv, 4 and 5. There I show in what sense we can say that the person who has sovereignty and possesses the Right of nature is bound by laws and can sin.

25 22. As for Religion, it's also certain that a man is freer, and most obedient to himself, the more he loves God and the more he worships him wholeheartedly. Insofar as we attend, not to the order of nature, which we don't know, but only to the dictates of reason concerning
30 Religion—and at the same time insofar as we consider them as revealed to us by God, as if he were speaking in us—or also as laws, revealed through the Prophets—to that extent, speaking in a human way, we say that a man obeys God if he loves him wholeheartedly. On the other hand, if he's guided by blind desire, he sins.

Meanwhile, we ought to be mindful that we are in God's 'power as
[III/284] clay is in the 'power of the potter, who from the same mass makes one vessel for an honorable purpose and another for a dishonorable one.⁴⁰ So we ought to remember that a man can indeed do something against these decrees of God insofar as they have been inscribed as laws in our Mind, or in the Mind of the Prophets.⁴¹ But he can't do anything
5 against God's eternal decree, which has been inscribed in the whole of nature and concerns the order of the whole of nature.

23. Therefore, like sin and obedience, taken strictly, so also justice and injustice can be conceived only in a state.⁴² For in nature there's nothing which can rightly be said to belong to one person and not to another.
10 Instead, everything belongs to everyone—that is, to whoever has the 'power to claim⁴³ it for himself. But in a state, where it's decided by a common Law what belongs to one person and what to another, a person is called just if he has a constant will to give to each person his own,⁴⁴ and unjust if he tries to make his own what belongs to someone else.

39. Both the OP and the NS have a reference to §18 at this point, though it's difficult to see the relevance of that paragraph to this sentence, which mentions the laws of the best state for the first time. Wernham (followed by Bartuschat 1994) omits it, suspecting a typesetter's error in reading an unclear manuscript. The (correct) citation of §18 in the next sentence may have caused some confusion. Proietti conjectures that Spinoza may have intended a reference to iii, 7.

40. Cf. Rom. 9:21, discussed in TTP xvi, 53 (ADN. XXXIV), and Letters 75 and 78.

41. An amplification of the argument of TTP iv, 23–37. See the annotation there.

42. Cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan* xiii, 13; DC xii, 1.

43. OP: *vendicandi*. Gebhardt would emend to *vindicandi*, but this is a mistake. On this see the Glossary entry CLAIM.

44. The formula is found in Ulpian (see Justinian, *Digest* I, i, 10) and Aquinas (ST II-II, lviii, 1), and criticized in Hobbes (*Leviathan* xv, 3).

- 15 24. For the rest, we've explained in our *Ethics* that praise and blame are affects of joy and sadness, accompanied by the idea of human virtue or weakness as a cause.⁴⁵

CHAPTER III

[On the Right of the Supreme 'Powers']¹

1. The order of each state is called Civil; the whole body of the state
20 is called a Commonwealth; and its common business, which depends on the direction of a sovereign, is called Public Affairs. Insofar as men enjoy, by civil right, all the advantages of a Commonwealth, we call them citizens; insofar as they're bound to obey the established practices of the commonwealth, *or* its laws, we call them subjects.² Finally, as we said
25 in ii, 17, there are three kinds of Civil order: Democratic, Aristocratic, and Monarchic. Before I begin to treat each of these separately, I'll first demonstrate what pertains to civil orders in general. The first thing that needs to be considered is the supreme right of a Commonwealth, *or* of the supreme 'powers.

30 2. From ii, 15,³ it's evident that the Right of a state, *or* of the supreme 'powers, is nothing more than the Right of nature, determined not by the power of each person, but by the power of a multitude, led as if by
[III/285] one mind. That is, just as each person in the natural state has as much right as he has power, so also the body and mind of the whole state have as much right as they have power. So each citizen, *or* subject, has less right in proportion as the Commonwealth itself is more powerful
5 than he is (see ii, 16). Therefore, no citizen either does or has anything by right except what he can defend by the common decision of the Commonwealth.

3. If a Commonwealth grants a Right to someone, and consequently, the 'power to live according to his own mentality—for otherwise, by ii,
10 12, it has given only words—by this act it has surrendered its own right

45. The definitions of praise and blame which Spinoza gave in E III P29S were in fact different.

1. Supplied from Letter 84.

2. Zac usefully contrasts this way of distinguishing between citizens and subjects with Rousseau's (*Of the Social Contract* I, vi). Spinoza defines the citizen, not by his participation in sovereign authority, but by his participation in the benefits of the civil order.

3. Perhaps it would have been more to the point for Spinoza to cite TP ii, 17 here. In any case, all of §§15–17 of the preceding chapter are relevant.

and transferred it to the person to whom it gave that 'power. Moreover, if it has given this 'power to two or more people, so that each of them may live according to his own mentality, by this act it has divided political authority. Finally, if it has given this same 'power to each of
 15 the citizens, by this act it has destroyed itself. The Commonwealth no longer remains, and everything reverts to the natural state. All these consequences are most evident from what we've said previously.

It follows that it can't be conceived in any way that each citizen should be permitted by the established practice of the Commonwealth to live according to his own mentality. So this Right of Nature—that
 20 each person is his own judge—necessarily ceases in the civil order.

I say explicitly *by the established practice of the Commonwealth*, for (if we consider the matter properly) each person's Right of nature does not cease in the civil order.⁴ Both in the natural state and in the civil order, man acts according to the laws of his own nature and looks out for his own advantage. In each situation, I say, man is guided by hope
 25 or fear, either to do or not to do, this or that action. The principal difference between the two conditions is that in the civil order everyone fears the same things: for everyone, there is one and the same cause of security and principle of living. This, of course, does not eliminate each person's ability to judge. Whoever has resolved to obey all the
 30 commands of a Commonwealth, whether because he feared its power or because he loves peace, is surely looking out for his own security and his own advantage, according to his own mentality.

4. Moreover, we also can't conceive that each citizen should be permitted to interpret the decrees, *or* laws, of the Commonwealth.⁵ If everyone were permitted to do this, by that fact everyone would be his own judge, since everyone could easily excuse *or* embellish his deeds
 [III/286] under a pretext of right, and hence, organize his life according to his own mentality. But (by §3) this is absurd.

5. We see, then, that no citizen is his own master. Each is subject to the control of the Commonwealth, and bound to carry out all its
 5 commands. He has no right to decide⁶ what's fair or unfair, pious or

4. In a letter to Jarig Jelles, dated June 1674 (Letter 50, IV/238–39), Spinoza identified this as the difference between himself and Hobbes. Cf. *Leviathan* xvii, 13.

5. On the doctrine of this and the following paragraph, cf. Hobbes, *Leviathan* xxvi, 20–23; xxx, 14.

6. OP: *decernendi*. NS: *onderscheiden*. PR would emend the text to *discernendi*, for reasons I find unconvincing. It's true that in a parallel passage in the TTP (Pref., §32, III/11/34) the verb is *discernere* (and the NS there has *onderscheiden*). But this seems an insufficient reason to alter the text, given the presence of *decernere* and cognates later in this passage and again in iv, 1, in what is evidently a reference back to this passage. Since they maintain that the two terms have “quasiment le même sens,” the change does

impious. On the contrary, because the body of the state must be guided as if by one mind, and hence, the will of the Commonwealth must be considered the will of all, what the Commonwealth has decided is just and good must be thought of as having been decreed by each [citizen].
 10 So, though the subject may think the decrees of the Commonwealth unfair, he's nevertheless bound to carry them out.

6. But here's an objection: isn't it contrary to the dictate of reason to subject yourself completely to someone else's judgment? so isn't the civil order incompatible with reason? If this is right, it would follow
 15 that the civil order is irrational and can be created only by men devoid of reason, not at all by men guided by reason.

But since reason teaches nothing contrary to nature, sound reason cannot dictate that each person remain his own master, so long as men are subject to affects (by i, 5), i.e. (by ii, 15),⁷ reason denies that it can happen [that reason should dictate that each person remain his
 20 own master].

Moreover, reason teaches us without qualification to seek peace, which certainly can't be obtained unless the common laws of the Commonwealth are observed without violation.⁸ So, the more a man is led by reason, i.e. (by ii, 11), the more free he is, the more steadfastly he will observe the laws of the Commonwealth and carry out the commands
 25 of the supreme 'power to whom he is subject.

Furthermore, the civil order is naturally established to take away the common fear and relieve the common wretchedness. So what it aims at most is what everyone who is guided by reason would strive to do in the state of nature, but in vain (by ii, 15). If a man who is guided
 30 by reason sometimes, by the command of the commonwealth, has to do something he knows is incompatible with reason, that harm is far outweighed by the good he derives from the civil order itself. For it is also a law of reason that we should choose the lesser of two evils.

So we can conclude that no one, insofar as he does what he must according to the law of the Commonwealth, acts contrary to the prescription of his own reason. Everyone will grant us this more easily
 [III/287] after we have explained how far the power of the Commonwealth, and consequently, its right, extends.

not seem necessary for the passage to make sense. And they don't make it, in similar circumstances, in iv, 1.

7. The OP and NS both read: "so long as men are subject to affects (by ii, 15), i.e. (by i, 5), reason denies that this can happen." Most editors seem to have accepted this text. But I think Wernham was right to emend the references.

8. Though the general argument of iii, 6, is reminiscent of Hobbes' *Leviathan* (xviii, 20), at this point Spinoza takes himself to be disagreeing with Hobbes. Cf. TTP ADN. XXXIII, at III/195/4.

7. For the first consideration is that just as (by ii, 11) in the state
 5 of nature the man who is guided by reason is the most powerful and
 the most his own master, so a Commonwealth will also be the most
 powerful and the most its own master, if it is founded on and directed
 by reason. For the Right of a Commonwealth is determined by the
 power of a multitude which is led as if by one mind. But there is no
 10 way this union of minds can be conceived unless the Commonwealth
 aims most at what sound reason teaches to be useful to all men.

8. The second consideration is that subjects are not their own masters,
 but are under the control of the Commonwealth, insofar as they fear
 its power *or* threats, or insofar as they love the civil order (by ii, 10).
 15 From this it follows that none of the things no one can be induced to
 do by rewards or threats come within the scope of the rights of the
 Commonwealth. For example, no one can surrender his ability to judge.
 For what rewards or threats can induce a man to believe that the whole
 is not greater than its part?⁹ or that God does not exist?⁹ or that a body
 20 which he sees to be finite is an infinite Being?⁹ or to believe absolutely
 anything else contrary to what he thinks or is aware of? Similarly, by
 what rewards or threats can a man be induced to love what he hates
 or to hate what he loves?

25 In this category we may put those things which human nature so abhors
 that it considers them worse than any other evil, as that a man should
 act as a witness against himself, that he should torture himself, that he
 should kill his parents, that he should not strive to avoid death, and the
 like, which no one can be induced to do by rewards or threats.¹⁰ But if
 we still want to say that the Commonwealth has the right, *or* 'power,
 to command such things, the only sense we can make of this is as if
 30 someone were to say that man can rightly be insane and mad. For what
 would it be but madness, to issue a law by which no one can be bound?

Here I'm speaking explicitly about things which can't belong to the
 Commonwealth's Right and which human nature is generally horrified
 by. Just because a fool or a madman can't be induced by any rewards or
 threats to carry out the commands—or just because a few people who
 [III/288] are devoted to some Religion or other judge the laws of the state to
 be worse than any evil¹¹—still the Commonwealth's laws are not null
 and void, since most of the citizens are restrained by them. So, because

9. Meijer plausibly suspected an allusion to the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist.

10. Cf. Hobbes, DC ii, 18–19; *Leviathan* xiv, 29, xxi, 11–25. But as Zac observed, though Hobbes granted subjects a right to resist such commandments, he did not deny the sovereign the right to issue them. Cf. also TTP xvii, 2.

11. Wernham suggests that Spinoza may be thinking here of the Mennonites, who objected, on religious grounds, to military service.

those who neither fear nor hope for anything are to that extent their
 5 own masters (by ii, 10), they are (by ii, 14) enemies of the state, whom
 it may rightly restrain.

9. The third and final consideration is that things most people resent
 are less within a Commonwealth's Right. For certainly men are guided
 by nature to unite in one aim, either because of a common [hope or]¹²
 10 a common fear, or because they long to avenge some common loss.
 Because the Commonwealth's Right is defined by the common power
 of a multitude, it's certain that its power and Right are diminished to
 the extent that it provides many people with reasons to conspire against
 it.¹³ Certainly the Commonwealth has some things it must fear for itself.
 15 Like each individual citizen, *or* like a man in the state of nature, the
 greater the reason for fear it has, the less it is its own master.

These are the matters I wanted to treat concerning the Right of
 the supreme 'powers over their subjects. Now before I treat their right
 against other [commonwealths], it seems there is a question about
 Religion which is apt to be asked, and needs to be answered.

20 10. Someone may object: don't the civil Order, and the obedience of
 subjects we've shown to be required in it,¹⁴ destroy the Religion by which
 we're bound to worship God? No. If we consider the matter properly,
 we won't find anything which could cause any uneasiness. For insofar as
 the Mind uses reason, it is its own master and is not subject to the control
 25 of the supreme 'powers (by ii, 11). Moreover, the true knowledge and
 love of God can't be subjected to anyone's command, any more than
 loving-kindness toward one's neighbor can (by iii, 8). Furthermore, if we
 consider that the supreme exercise of loving-kindness is to protect the
 peace and bring about harmony, we won't doubt that a person has really
 30 done his duty if he has brought each person as much aid as the laws of
 the Commonwealth—i.e., harmony and tranquillity—permit.

As for external forms of worship, they certainly can do nothing at
 all, either to help or to harm the true knowledge of God and the love
 which necessarily follows from it. Indeed, we shouldn't make so much

12. This phrase does not appear in either the OP or the NS, but PR are surely right
 to add it to the text on the basis of vi, 1. The pairing of these affects is Spinoza's standard
 practice. They cite iii, 3, and v, 6.

13. Madeleine Francès saw this paragraph (with iv, 4) as justifying a right of rebellion
 against tyranny. It seems unlikely that Spinoza would have wished to put it that way.
 Cf. v, 7. In the TTP (xvi, 48) he is quite critical of those who try to seize power from
 their rulers. The subsequent history of Dutch politics would probably not have made
 him any more comfortable with popular rebellions. But he would also hold, I think,
 that governments which use their power in ways which alienate large numbers of their
 citizens cannot legitimately complain if they face violent resistance.

14. I take it that this is a reference to §8, and that the objection arises from Spinoza's
 Erastian subordination of the church to the state. Cf. TTP xix.

of them that it's worth disturbing the public peace and tranquillity on their account.¹⁵

[III/289] Moreover, it's certain that I am not, by the Right of nature, i.e. (by ii, 3), by divine decree, the defender of religion. For I don't have, as the Disciples of Christ once did, the 'power to cast out unclean spirits and to perform miracles.¹⁶ This 'power, of course, is so very necessary
 5 for spreading Religion to places where it's forbidden that without it, not only do we waste time and trouble, as they say,¹⁷ but in addition we create a great many sources of distress. Every age has seen the most grievous examples of this.

Everyone, therefore, wherever he may be, can worship God in accordance with true Religion,¹⁸ and look out for himself, which is the duty of
 10 a private man. Moreover, the responsibility for spreading Religion must be committed either to God or to the supreme 'powers, who alone have the responsibility for Public Affairs. With that I return to my subject.

11. Now that we've explained the right of the supreme 'powers over
 15 citizens, and the duty of subjects, it remains for us to consider their right against other [commonwealths]. From what we've said already, it will be easy to know what this right is. For since (by iii, 2) the Right of the supreme 'power is nothing more than the Right itself of nature, it follows that two states are related to one another as two men are in the state of nature, with one exception.¹⁹ A Commonwealth can take precautions against
 20 being overpowered by another Commonwealth. But a man in the state of nature—a man burdened daily with sleep, often with illness or grief, and in the end with old age—that man can't provide security for himself against being overpowered by another man. Moreover, he is liable to other disadvantages from which the Commonwealth can make itself secure.

12. The Commonwealth, therefore, is its own master insofar as it
 25 can look after itself and take precautions against being overpowered by another Commonwealth (by ii, 9 and 15). And (by ii, 10 and 15) it's subject to the control of another insofar as it fears the other Commonwealth's power, or insofar as the other Commonwealth prevents it from achieving

15. Cf. TTP xix, 3.

16. Referring to Mark 16:14–18.

17. The phrase *oleum et opera* is proverbial, and occurs in Plautus' *Poenulus* 332.

18. Since Latin has no articles, nothing in it calls for either a definite or an indefinite article. The NS translator supplied an indefinite article. Since I understand Spinoza to be a pluralist, who thinks that many existing religions have an equal right to be considered true (because they are equally effective means of achieving salvation), I regard this as reasonable. But I leave the translation ambiguous. "The true religion," for Spinoza, would be any religion which teaches the fundamental doctrines of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Cf. TTP xii, 34–37. I've discussed these issues in Curley 2010.

19. Cf. Hobbes, DC xiii, 7, or *Leviathan* xiii, 12, xxx, 30.

what it wants, or, finally, insofar as it needs the other's aid for its own
 30 preservation or growth. For we can't doubt that if two Commonwealths
 are willing to provide mutual aid to each another, the two together can do
 more, and so, together have more right than either one has alone. See ii, 13.

13. We can understand this more clearly if we consider that by
 [III/290] nature two Commonwealths are enemies. For (by ii, 14) in the state
 of nature men are enemies. So those who retain the Right of nature
 outside a Commonwealth remain enemies. So if one Commonwealth
 wants to make war on another, and will stop at nothing to bring it
 5 under its control, it has the right to try this. To wage war it's enough
 for it to have the will to wage war. But it can't settle anything about
 peace unless the other Commonwealth voluntarily acquiesces. From
 this it follows that the Rights of war belong to each Commonwealth,
 whereas the Rights of peace belong, not to one Commonwealth, but
 to at least two Commonwealths, which for that reason are called allies.

10 14. This alliance remains firmly established so long as the reason
 for making the alliance—the fear of loss *or* hope of profit—continues
 to motivate both parties. But if either Commonwealth loses its hope or
 fear, it is once again its own master (by ii, 10), and the chain by which
 the Commonwealths were bound to one another is broken of its own
 15 accord. So each Commonwealth has a complete right to dissolve the
 alliance whenever it wants to. It can't be said that it acts deceitfully or
 treacherously because it rescinds its assurance as soon as the cause of
 fear or hope is taken away. This condition was the same for each of the
 contracting parties: whichever one could first be free of fear would be
 its own master, and would use its freedom as it thought best.

20 Moreover, no one contracts for the future unless he assumes that
 certain circumstances will prevail. If these circumstances change, then
 the nature of the whole situation also changes. That's why each of the
 allied Commonwealths retains the right to look out for itself, and why
 each of them strives, as far as it can, to get beyond fear, and hence, to
 be its own master. That's also why each of them strives to prevent the
 25 other from becoming more powerful.

So, if any Commonwealth complains that it has been deceived, it
 can't condemn the good faith of the allied Commonwealth, but only
 its own foolishness, because it entrusted its own well-being to another
 Commonwealth, which was its own master and for which the well-being
 of its own state is the supreme law.²⁰

20. Cf. TTP xvi, 15–19, 43–45 with *The Prince*, ch. xviii. Gebhardt (V, 91, 140) cites similar passages in De la Court and de Witt. The maxim *salus populi suprema lex* is embraced by Hobbes, DC xiii, 2; *Leviathan* xxx, 1.

30 15. When Commonwealths have contracted a peace with one another, they have the right to settle questions which can be raised about the conditions of the peace, *or* the laws by which they have pledged their loyalty to one another, since the laws of peace do not belong to one Commonwealth only, but to all those which contract together (by iii, 13). But if they can't agree among themselves about these matters, they thereby return to the state of war.

[III/291] 16. The greater the number of Commonwealths which enter into an agreement for peace with one another, the less each one must be feared by the others, *or* the less is the 'power each one has to make war, and the more it is bound to observe the conditions of peace, i.e. 5 (by iii, 13), the less it is its own master and the more it is bound to accommodate itself to the common will of the allies.

17. What we've said here does not in any way eliminate the good faith which both sound reason and Religion teach us to observe.²¹ Neither reason nor Scripture teaches that every assurance we give is 10 to be honored. When I've promised someone to guard the money he has given me to be kept in secret for him, I'm not bound to keep my promise once I know, or believe I know, that what he gave me was stolen. On the contrary, I will act more properly if I undertake to restore it to its owners.

Similarly, if the supreme 'power has promised to do something for 15 someone, and afterward time *or* reason has taught, or seemed to teach, that it will harm the common well-being of his subjects, surely he is bound to break his word. Therefore, since Scripture teaches only in general that we should keep our word, and leaves the particular cases where exceptions are to be made to each person's judgment, it teaches nothing incompatible with what we've just shown.

20 18. But to avoid having to interrupt the thread of my argument frequently to deal with similar objections, I want to warn that I've demonstrated all these conclusions from the necessity of human nature, however it may be considered. That is, I've demonstrated them from the universal striving all men have to preserve themselves, a striving 25 in all men, whether they're wise or ignorant. So however we consider men, whether as guided by an affect or by reason, the result will be the same. For the demonstration, as we've said, is universal.

21. Spinoza's attitude toward promise-keeping seems much more relaxed here than it had been in E IV P72. For a useful discussion, see Garrett 1990.

[III/291]

CHAPTER IV

*[What Matters of State Depend Only
on the Governance of the Supreme 'Powers']¹*

1. We've shown in Chapter 3 that the right of the supreme 'powers
30 is determined by their power, and we've seen that [that right] consists
chiefly in this, that it is, as it were, the mind of the state,² by which
everyone ought to be guided. So the supreme 'powers alone have the
right to decide³ what's good and what's evil, what's right and what's
[III/292] wrong, i.e., what must be done or omitted by each person, or by all
together. We've seen, therefore, that the supreme 'powers alone have
the right to make laws, and, when there's a dispute about them, to
interpret them in each particular case, and to decide whether a given
case was decided contrary to the law or in accordance with it (see iii,
5 3–5). Next, we've seen that they alone possess the right to make war,
to lay down and offer conditions for peace, and to accept those offered
(see iii, 12–13).⁴

2. Since all these activities, as well as the means required to carry
them out, are matters which concern the whole body of the state, that
10 is, Public Affairs, it follows that Public Affairs depend only on the
governance of whoever has the supreme authority. It follows that only
the supreme 'power has the Right to judge each person's deeds, to
require each person to account for what he's done, to punish offenders,
15 to settle disputes between citizens concerning the law, and to set up
people knowledgeable in the laws, who will administer them in its place.

1. Supplied from Letter 84.

2. OP: *Jus summarum potestatum, quod earum potentia determinatur; in praec. Cap. ostendimus, idque in hoc potissimum consistere vidimus, nempe quòd imperii veluti mens sit.* The NS translates the last clause: *dat de Heerschappijen gelijk een ziel, of een geest zijn.* If that's correct, we should have *sint* instead of *sit*. Wernham emended his text accordingly. But his translation—"it was, so to speak, the mind of the state"—takes the verb to be singular, seeming to agree with the OP. It's unclear whether his "it" refers to the sovereign (his translation of *summae potestates*) or the right (*jus*) of the sovereign. Either answer might get some support from other passages: in vi, 19, the king is said to be, as it were, the mind (*mens*) of a monarchical commonwealth (*civitas*); in x, 9, the laws (*jura*) are said to be the soul (*anima*) of the state (*imperii*).

3. OP: *decernendi*. NS: *om t'onderscheiden en t'oordelen*. See the note at III/286/5.

4. The enumeration of the rights of the sovereign here and in the following section closely parallels that in Hobbes, DCv vi, 18; *Leviathan* xviii, 16. The comparison of the sovereign to the mind (or soul) of the state is also in Hobbes, DCv vi, 19.

In addition, [the supreme 'power] has the right to organize and use all the means of war and peace, to found and fortify cities, to assemble soldiers, to assign military offices, to command what it wants done, to send and receive ambassadors for the sake of peace, and finally, to levy
20 taxes for all these purposes.

3. So, since only the supreme 'power possesses the Right to handle public affairs, or to choose ministers to do so, it follows that if a subject, by his own decision, without the knowledge of the supreme Council, undertakes some public business—even if he believes that what he intends to do will be best for the Commonwealth—he is laying claim
25 to political authority.⁵

4. But people commonly ask: is the supreme 'power bound by laws?⁶ and so, can it sin? But since the words “law” and “sin” customarily apply, not only to the Laws of the Commonwealth, but also to the common rules of all natural things, and especially to the common rules
30 of reason, we can't say, without qualification, that the Commonwealth isn't bound by any laws, *or* can't sin. For if a Commonwealth weren't bound by any laws, *or* rules, without which the Commonwealth would not be a Commonwealth, then we'd have to think of it, not as a natural thing, but as a fantasy.

The Commonwealth sins, then, when it does, or allows to happen,
[III/293] what can be a cause of its ruin. We say then that it sins in the same sense in which Philosophers or Doctors say that nature sins. In this sense we can say that the Commonwealth sins when it does something contrary to the dictate of reason. For a Commonwealth is most its own
5 master when it acts according to the dictate of reason (by iii, 7). Insofar as it acts contrary to reason, it fails itself *or* sins.

We'll understand these things more clearly if we consider that when we say each person can decide whatever he wishes concerning a thing of which he is the master, this 'power must be defined not only by the
10 power of the agent, but also by the capacity of what he's acting on. If I say, for example, that I can rightly do whatever I wish concerning this table, I surely don't mean that I have the right to make this table eat grass. Similarly, even though we say that men are not their own masters,

5. A parallel passage in the TTP (xvi, 51) accuses such a subject of treason. Zac suggests that Spinoza might illustrate this by noting the harmful consequences of the prophets' interventions in affairs of state. For examples of this concern, see TTP xvii, 37, 55, 71–72, 108–11; TP iii, 4. He would probably also have wished to cite the interventions of Christian clerics, as illustrated in TTP xix, 2.

6. The question was asked (and answered in the negative) by Grotius (see Grotius 1647/2001, vi, 14), who cites Augustine as concurring. Cf. Justinian, *Digest* I, iii, 31. For a helpful history of the issue, see Pennington 1993. See also Hobbes, DCv vii, 14; *Leviathan* xxvi, 6.

but are subject to the Commonwealth, we don't mean that they lose
 15 their human nature and take on a different nature. Nor do we mean
 that the Commonwealth has the right to make men fly, or (what is
 equally impossible) to make men honor those things which move them
 to laughter or disgust. What we mean is that when certain circumstances
 are present, the subjects respect and fear the Commonwealth, and that
 20 when those circumstances are absent, this fear and respect are destroyed.
 When they're destroyed, so is the Commonwealth itself.

So for the Commonwealth to be its own master, it's bound to maintain
 the causes of fear and respect. Otherwise it ceases to be a Common-
 wealth. For it's as impossible for one who holds political authority (or
 those who do so) to run, drunken or naked, through the streets with
 25 prostitutes, to play the actor, to openly violate *or* disdain the laws he
 himself has made,⁷ and at the same time to preserve his authority, as
 it is to both be and not be at the same time. To slaughter and rob his
 subjects, to rape their young women, and actions of that kind, turn fear
 into indignation, and hence turn the civil order into a state of hostility.⁸

5. We see, then, in what sense we can say that the Commonwealth
 30 is bound by laws and can sin. But if by law we understand the civil
 Law, which can be defended by the civil Law itself, and by sin what
 the civil Law prohibits us from doing—i.e., if we take these terms in
 their proper meaning—we can't say in any way that the Common-
 wealth is bound by laws or can sin. For the rules and causes of fear
 and respect the Commonwealth is bound, for its own sake, to observe
 [III/294] don't concern the civil Law, but the Law of nature. By §4 they can't
 be defended by the civil Law, but [only] by the Law of war. The only
 way the Commonwealth is bound by them is the way a man in the
 state of nature is bound to take care not to kill himself: to be able to
 be his own master, *or* not to be an enemy to himself, he must take care
 5 not to kill himself. This care, of course, is not obedience, but freedom
 of human nature. But the civil Law depends only on the decree of the
 Commonwealth, which is not bound to conduct itself according to
 anyone's wishes but its own, if it is to remain free. It's also not bound
 to consider anything good or evil except what it has decided is good
 10 or evil for itself. Therefore, it has the right not only to defend itself,
 and to make and interpret laws, but also to repeal them, and from the
 fullness of its power, to pardon any guilty party.

7. Nero was notorious for such conduct. Cf. Tacitus, *Annals* xiii, 25; xiv, 14–15; xv, 33–37; xvi, 4–5.

8. Cf. Machiavelli's advice in *The Prince* xix.

6. There's no doubt that the contract,⁹ *or* the laws by which a multitude transfers its right to a Council or a man, ought to be violated
 15 when it's in the interest of the general welfare to violate them. But (by §3) no private person is entitled to make the judgment about whether it's in the interest of the general welfare to violate them or not. Only the sovereign can rightly do this. Therefore, by the civil Law only the sovereign is left to be the interpreter of those laws. To this we may
 20 add that no private person can lawfully defend them. So they don't really bind the sovereign.

But if that's the nature of these laws—that they can't be violated unless the strength of the Commonwealth is at the same time weakened, i.e., unless the general fear of most citizens is at the same time turned into indignation—by that very fact [of political weakness arising from
 25 general indignation] the Commonwealth is dissolved, and the contract is inoperative. So the contract is defended, not by the civil Law, but by the Law of war. So the sovereign is bound to observe the conditions of this contract for no other reason than a man in the state of nature is bound to take care not to kill himself, if he's not to be an enemy to himself (as we said in §5).¹⁰

CHAPTER V

*[The ultimate and highest end a State can aim at]*¹

1. In ii, 11, we showed that a man is most his own master when he is
 [III/295] led most by reason, and so (by iii, 7) that a Commonwealth is most powerful, and most its own master, when it's founded on and directed by reason. Moreover, since the best way of living, to preserve yourself as much as possible, is one guided by the prescription of reason, it

9. OP: *contractūs*. NS: *bet verdrach*. Gebhardt follows the OP, making “contract” plural. Wernham, observing that the OP editors were responsible for most of the accents in Spinoza's text, follows the NS, taking its singular to be obviously correct. (He systematically omits the OP's accent marks in his texts, as do all subsequent editors I have seen.) He also notes that Spinoza follows Hobbes in making democracy the original form of constitution, but does not follow Hobbes in making the transfer of sovereignty to a monarch unconditional. On the first point, see TP viii, 12; TTP xvii, 33; Hobbes, DCv vii, 5–12; Hobbes, *Leviathan* xvii, 13, xviii, 1. On the second, TP vii, 1; Hobbes, *Leviathan* xviii, 4.

10. That is, as Zac suggests, if those who have been given authority do not use it in the deepest interests of the citizens, they risk destroying their authority.

1. Supplied from Letter 84.

5 follows that the best course is the one a man or a Commonwealth pursues, insofar as it's most its own master. For when we say that someone has done something by right, we're not saying he's done it in the best way.² It's one thing to cultivate a field by right and another to cultivate it in the best way. It's also, I say, one thing to defend oneself, preserve oneself, make a judgment, etc., by right, and
10 another to defend oneself, preserve oneself, and make a judgment in the best way. So, it's one thing to command and have responsibility for Public Affairs by right, and another to command and govern Public Affairs in the best way. Let this be enough concerning the right of each Commonwealth in general. Now it's time to discuss the best condition of each state.

15 2. We can know easily what the best condition of each state is from the end of the civil condition, which is nothing other than peace and security of life.³ Therefore, that state is best where men pass their lives harmoniously and where the laws are kept without violation.⁴ For certainly we should impute rebellions, wars, and con-
20 tempt for, *or* violation of, the laws not so much to the wickedness of the subjects as to the corruption of the state. Men aren't born civil; they become civil.⁵

Moreover, the natural affects of men are the same everywhere. If wickedness is more prevalent in one Commonwealth than in another, and more sins are committed there, this surely comes from the fact
25 that the [more wicked] Commonwealth hasn't provided adequately for harmony, hasn't set up its laws wisely enough, and so, hasn't obtained the absolute Right of a Commonwealth.⁶ For a civil order which hasn't eliminated the causes of rebellions, where you constantly have to fear war, and where the laws are frequently violated, is not *that* different
30 from the state of nature, where everyone lives according to his own mentality, his life always in great danger.⁷

3. But just as the subjects' vices, and their excessive license and stubbornness, are to be imputed to the Commonwealth, so, on the other hand, their virtue and constant observance of the laws are to be attributed most to the virtue of the Commonwealth and its absolute

2. Hobbes makes a similar distinction in *Leviathan* xxx, 20. Cf. also Grotius 1647/2001, vi, 1 (Gebhardt V).

3. Prima facie this conflicts with TTP v, 18–19, which claimed a wider range of ends for the creation of a social order. Spinoza will try to correct this impression in §5.

4. Similarly Hobbes, *Leviathan* xxx, 7 (Gebhardt V).

5. Zac cites, among other things, Machiavelli, *Discourses* III, 29.

6. Cf. TTP iii, 16 (Gebhardt V).

7. Gebhardt compares the thought in this paragraph to that in *Leviathan* xxix, 1.

right. This is evident from ii, 15. That's why it's rightly credited to
 [III/296] Hannibal's exceptional virtue that there was never any rebellion in his
 army.⁸

4. A Commonwealth whose subjects, terrified by fear, don't take up
 arms should be said to be without war, but not at peace. Peace isn't the
 5 privation of war,⁹ but a virtue which arises from strength of mind. For
 (by ii, 19) it's obedience, a constant will to do what must be done in
 accordance with the common decree of the Commonwealth. When the
 peace of a Commonwealth depends on its subjects' lack of spirit—so
 that they're led like sheep, and know only how to be slaves—it would
 10 be more properly called a wasteland than a Commonwealth.¹⁰

5. When we say, then, that the best state is one where men pass their
 lives harmoniously, I mean that they pass a *human* life, one defined not
 merely by the circulation of the blood, and other things common to all
 15 animals, but mostly by reason, the true virtue and life of the Mind.¹¹

6. But note: when I say a rule has been set up for this end, I mean
 that a free multitude has set it up, not that the rule over a multitude
 has been acquired by the right of war.¹² For a free multitude is guided
 by hope more than by fear, whereas a multitude which has been subju-
 20 gated is guided more by fear than by hope.¹³ The first want to cultivate
 life; the second care only to avoid death. The first are eager to live for
 themselves; the second are forced to belong to the victor. So we say
 that the second are slaves, and the first free.

8. Gebhardt (V, 142) cites Livy xxviii, 12; Machiavelli, *The Prince* xvii, and *Discourses* iii, 21. These sources do not unequivocally support Spinoza's judgment, unless we're prepared to give the notion of "virtue" the rather special meaning it has in Machiavelli. Livy is amazed that Hannibal was able to keep his army together under very adverse circumstances. But he offers no explanation for this feat. The passages in Machiavelli do attribute Hannibal's success to his "virtue" (*virtù*), but only by understanding that concept in a characteristically Machiavellian way: Hannibal's soldiers knew him to be harsh and cruel. So they regarded him with both admiration and fear. "Without cruelty his other virtues would not have done the job" (Wootton 1994, 53; Machiavelli makes a similar judgment in *Discourses* iii, 21). In Polybius xi, 19, we find an attribution of Hannibal's success to his virtue, which does not seem to require the kind of qualifications necessary in Machiavelli.

9. Perhaps aimed at Hobbes, DCv i, 12; *Leviathan* xiii, 8 (Wernham, Zac).

10. An allusion (as many have noted) to Tacitus, *Agricola* 30: *ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*, where they make a wasteland, they call it a peace. Cf. III/298/19–20, and Curley 1996.

11. Cf. TTP iv, 9–15; xx, 12.

12. Cf. Hobbes, who argues that the rights of the kings of England depended on their possession of power, not on the justice of the wars by which they (or their predecessors) had acquired it. Cf. *Leviathan* xviii, 1, xx, 1, and in the Review and Conclusion: "there is scarce a commonwealth in the world whose beginnings can in conscience be justified."

13. Here Spinoza rejects the argument of *Leviathan* xx, 2.

The end of a state someone acquires by the Right of war, then, is
 25 to be master; it has slaves rather than subjects. When we attend to the
 general right of each state, there is no essential difference between one
 created by a free multitude, and one acquired by the right of war. Still,
 we've shown that each has a very different end. Furthermore, the means
 by which each state must be preserved are very different.

30 7. Machiavelli, ever shrewd, has shown in detail the means a Prince
 must use to stabilize and preserve his rule, if all he craves is to be
 master. Why he did this may not be clear. If his purpose was good,
 as we must believe of a wise man, it seems to have been to show how
 imprudent many people are to try to remove a Tyrant from their midst,
 [III/297] when they can't remove the causes of the prince's being a Tyrant. On
 the contrary, they give the prince more reason to fear, and so more
 reason to be a Tyrant. When a multitude has made an example of their
 prince, and glories in his assassination, as in a deed well done, they give
 the new prince such reasons.

5 Perhaps Machiavelli also wanted to show how much a free multitude
 should beware of entrusting its well-being absolutely to one person.
 Unless the prince is so vain that he thinks he can please everyone, he
 must fear treachery every day. So he's forced to look out for himself,
 and to set traps for the multitude, rather than look out for their inter-
 ests. I'm the more inclined to believe this about that very prudent man
 10 because it's clear he was on the side of freedom, and gave very good
 advice for protecting it.¹⁴

14. Wernham thought there was "some slight justification" for Spinoza's interpretation of Machiavelli in ch. xxiv of *The Prince*, but that applied to the whole work it was "quite indefensible." He granted that Rousseau read Machiavelli similarly, calling attention to *Social Contract* III, 6: "Pretending to give lessons to kings, he gave great lessons to the people. Machiavelli's *Prince* is the book of republicans." (Cf. TTP xvii, 8, 111; xviii, 30–37.) But as Zac notes, Spinoza and Rousseau are hardly alone in their reading. Cf. Diderot's article on Machiavellism in the *Encyclopédie*: "Read well this work. If you ever accept a master, he will be as I paint him for you. That's the ferocious beast to whom you will abandon yourselves" ("Machiavelisme," *Encyclopédie*, IX, 793). Diderot in turn cites Bacon: "This man teaches tyrants nothing. They know only too well what they must do. But he instructs the people what they have to dread." He might also have cited Bayle's *Dictionary* article on Machiavelli.

[III/297]

CHAPTER VI

*[How a Monarchic Government Should Be Set Up
So as Not to Fall into a Tyranny]¹*

1. Men, we've said,² are guided more by affect than by reason. So a multitude naturally agrees, and wishes to be led, as if by one mind, not
15 because reason is guiding them, but because of some common affect. As we said in iii, 9, they have a common hope, or fear, or a common desire to avenge some harm. Moreover, all men fear being alone, because no one alone has the strength to defend himself, and no one alone can
20 provide the things necessary for life. So by nature men desire a civil order. It can't happen by nature that they'll ever completely dissolve it.

2. Therefore, when disagreements and rebellions are stirred up in a Commonwealth—as they often are—the result is never that the citizens dissolve the Commonwealth—though this often happens in other
25 kinds of society. Instead, if they can't settle their disagreements while preserving the form of the Commonwealth, they change its form to another. So when I speak of the means required to preserve the state, I understand the means necessary to preserve its form without any notable change.

30 3. If human nature were so constituted that men desired most what is most useful, there'd be no need of skill to produce harmony and loyalty. But it's evident that human nature isn't at all like that. As a
[III/298] result, it's been necessary to set up a state, so that everyone—both those who rule and those who are ruled—does what's for the common well-being, whether they want to or not. That is, it's been necessary to set it up so that everyone is compelled to live according to the prescription of reason, whether of his own accord, or by force, or by necessity.

This happens if the affairs of the state are so arranged that nothing
5 which concerns the common well-being is committed absolutely to the good faith of any one person. For no one is so alert that he doesn't sometimes lose focus; and no one has such a powerful and unimpaired mind that he is not sometimes broken down and apt to be overcome,

1. Supplied from Letter 84.

2. Some editors have taken the reference to be to i, 7, but Ramond's suggestion (i, 5; ii, 14; ii, 18) seems more accurate.

especially when the greatest strength of character is needed. It's folly to
 10 require of someone else what no one can ask of himself, that he look
 out more for others than for himself, that he not be greedy, or envi-
 ous, or ambitious, etc., especially when every day he has the strongest
 incentives to all the affects.

4. Admittedly, experience seems to teach that it contributes to peace
 15 and harmony when all 'power is conferred on one man. No state has
 stood so long without notable change as that of the Turks. On the other
 hand, none have been less lasting than popular, *or* Democratic states.
 Nowhere else have there been so many rebellions.

Still, if slavery, barbarism, and being without protection are to be
 20 called peace, nothing is more wretched for men than peace.³ No doubt
 there are more, and more bitter, quarrels between parents and chil-
 dren than between masters and slaves. Nevertheless, it doesn't make
 for the orderly management of a household to change paternal Right
 into mastery, and treat children like slaves. To transfer all 'power to
 one man makes for bondage, not peace. As we've said, peace does not
 25 consist in the privation of war, but in a union *or* harmony of minds.

5. Anyone who believes that one man alone can control the supreme
 Right of a Commonwealth is greatly mistaken. As we showed in Chap-
 ter 2, Right is determined only by power. But the power of one man is
 30 quite unequal to bearing such a burden. That's why, when a multitude
 has chosen a King, he seeks Commanders *or* Counselors *or* friends, to
 whom he commits his own well-being and that of everyone else. So
 a state thought to be an absolute Monarchy is really, in practice, an
 Aristocracy.⁴ Of course, it's not openly an aristocracy, only covertly one.
 35 But that makes it the worst kind.

Moreover, a King who is a boy, or sick, or burdened with old age, is
 [III/299] king at the pleasure of others. The ones who really have the supreme
 'power are the ones who administer the highest affairs of state, or who
 are closest to the King—not to mention that a King who is at the mercy
 of his lust is often manipulated to act according to the lust of one or
 5 another seducer or catamite. "I had heard," says Orsines, "that in Asia

3. Alluding again to Tacitus, *Agricola* 30. Cf. III/296/8–10. Francès (Pléiade) comments that Spinoza treats the turbulence we find in democratic societies as the price we must pay for a life worth living. Cf. also Machiavelli's tribute to republics in *Discourses* II, ii: people acquire a love of political freedom, because they see by experience that states have never been successful or great except when they have been free. Only in republics is the public interest a guiding principle.

4. Some trace this thought back to Aristotle (*Politics* 1287b8–9), but Aristotle does not seem nearly as critical as Spinoza does of aristocracy-masquerading-as-monarchy. Matheron argues (in PR) that Spinoza thinks an open aristocracy can be good under certain conditions (to be explained in Ch. viii), but that a concealed aristocracy is necessarily bad.

women used to reign; but this is something new, that a eunuch should reign" (Curtius, X, i).⁵

6. Moreover, this is certain: that a Commonwealth is always put at greater risk on account of its citizens than on account of its enemies.⁶ For good men are indeed rare.⁷ It follows that someone entrusted with
10 the whole right to rule will always fear his own citizens more than his enemies. So he'll try to look out for himself, and to plot against his subjects, not look after their interests—especially the ones famous for their wisdom or more powerful because of their wealth.⁸

7. In addition, Kings even fear their sons more than they love them, and fear them the more, the more the sons are skilled in the arts of war
15 and peace, and the more their virtues make their subjects love them. That's why they try to educate them so that they'll have no cause to fear them. Their courtiers are very ready to obey the King in this, and do their best to have a successor King who is untrained, whom they can manipulate by their craft.⁹

8. From all these considerations it follows that a King is less his
20 own Master, and that the condition of his subjects is more wretched, the more absolutely the Right of the Commonwealth is transferred to him. So, to establish a Monarchic government properly, it's necessary to lay firm foundations for it. If this is done, the Monarch will be secure, and the multitude will have peace. Accordingly, a Monarch will
25 be most his own master, when he's most attentive to the well-being of the multitude. I'll first set out briefly, and then show in an orderly way, what the foundations of Monarchic government are.

9. It's necessary to found and fortify one or more cities, all of whose citizens enjoy the same rights in the Commonwealth, whether they
30 live within the city's walls or (because they're involved in agriculture) outside them—but on this condition: that each city maintains a certain number of citizens for its own defense, and the common defense. If a city can't furnish this force, it must be considered in subjection, under different conditions.¹⁰

5. See Quintus Curtius X, i, 22–42, for the story of how Bagoas, a eunuch who had won Alexander's favor by performing sexual services, procured the death of Orsines. Gebhardt suggests that Spinoza may also be thinking of more recent examples: Henry III of France, James I of England, and William III of Orange.

6. A recurrent theme. Cf. below, vii, 14, and in the TTP xvii, 3.

7. Cf. TTP xii, 7, and TP ii, 8. Some translators would render this sentence: "good (or loyal) citizens are rare," which is certainly possible.

8. Cf. the parallel passage in *De la Court*, I, vi, 6.

9. Wernham cites *De la Court* I, i, 10 (p. 40 in the 1661 edition), which in turn cites Tacitus, *Annals* II, lxxii.

10. I.e. (as I take it), its citizens will not possess the same civic rights as do those who contribute to the common defense.

10. The army must be formed only from the citizens, without exception, and not from any others.¹¹ Moreover, everyone should be required
 [III/300] to bear arms, and no one is to be counted as a citizen until he's acquired military skill, and promised to practice that skill at the designated times of the year.¹²

Next, after the armed forces of each clan have been divided into companies and regiments, no one is to be chosen leader of a company
 5 unless he has learned military Engineering.¹³

Furthermore, the leaders of companies and regiments are to be chosen for life. But whoever commands the entire army of a clan is to be chosen only in wartime, and is to have supreme command for only a year. He cannot be continued in command or chosen again later.¹⁴ These commanders are to be chosen from the King's Coun-
 10 selors or from those who've served as Counselor (on the Counselors, see §§15ff.).

11. All the city residents and farmers—i.e., all the Citizens—are to be divided into clans, which will be distinguished by their name and by some insignia.¹⁵ Everyone born into one of these clans is to be received into the ranks of the citizens; his name is to be entered in the list of
 15 his clan as soon as he has reached an age where he can bear arms and learn his duties. The only exceptions should be those who are notorious for some wickedness, or who are mute, or madmen, or servants, who make their living by performing some servile function.

12. The fields, and all the land, and if possible, the houses too, should
 20 be public property, i.e., subject to the control of the one who has the

11. Cf. TTP xvii, 74–75, on the advantage the Hebrew state derived from relying exclusively on a citizen army, and Machiavelli, who warned against the dangers of relying on mercenaries or “auxiliaries” (troops under the authority of a foreign prince), whose loyalty the prince could not depend on. See *The Prince* xii–xiii, and *Discourses* II, 20.

12. Spinoza's insistence on the duty of all citizens to be prepared for military service (including combat) may to some degree explain his opposition to admitting women to citizenship (xi, 4). Wernham notes that in Athens young men only became full citizens after two years of military training.

13. Siege operations were an important part of warfare in Spinoza's day. Moreover, the Dutch Republic depended for its defense on a system of dikes whose management required scientific knowledge. (When the French armies invaded in 1672, the Dutch opened the dikes to flood the fields and make them impassable. See Israel 1995, ch. 31.)

14. Appuhn suggests that Spinoza was so concerned to avoid a fortunate general's achieving political power that he dismissed such military considerations as the need for unity and continuity of command. No doubt Spinoza's knowledge of Roman history made him acutely aware of the threat successful military commanders could pose to civilian government (a threat the popularity of the House of Orange made very real to supporters of republican government in the Netherlands).

15. Zac thinks Spinoza is inspired by the example of the tribes of Israel. He may be right. But those groups had a common biological origin, which is not clearly true of Spinoza's “clans.”

Right of the Commonwealth.¹⁶ He should lease them for an annual rent to the citizens, *or* to the city residents and farmers. In time of peace everyone should be free, *or* exempt, from any taxation. One part of the rent the King receives should be dedicated to the fortification of the Commonwealth; the other, to his personal use. For in time of peace it's
 25 necessary to fortify cities as if for war, and in addition, to have ships and other instruments of war prepared.¹⁷

13. Once the King has been chosen from some clan, no one is to be considered Noble except those who have descended from the King, who for that reason should be distinguished by Royal insignia both from their own and from the other clans.

30 14. Male nobles related to the King by the third or fourth degree of consanguinity should be prohibited from marrying; any children they've fathered should be considered illegitimate, and unworthy of any high office. Nor should the children be recognized as their parents' heirs. Instead, all the parents' goods should revert to the King.

15. Moreover the King's Counselors—those who are closest to him,
 [III/301] or who are second in rank—should be many, and should be chosen only from the citizens. Three or four or (if there aren't more than six hundred clans) five should be chosen from each clan. Together they'll constitute one member of the Council, not for life, but for three, or
 5 four, or five years. So each year a third, or fourth, or fifth part of them is newly chosen. But in this choice, we should note particularly that from each clan at least one of the Counselors chosen should be a jurist.¹⁸

16. The King should make this choice himself. At the time of year
 10 appointed for the election of new Counselors each clan must send the King the names of all its citizens who have reached the age of fifty, and who have been duly advanced as candidates for this office. From them the King should choose the one he wishes.¹⁹ But in a year in which a

16. Spinoza will defend this position in vii, 19. But common ownership of the land will not be a feature of his aristocracies. Cf. viii, 10.

17. In the war of 1672 the Dutch had to face, not only the threat of invasion by a French army which outnumbered its forces four to one, but also a blockade of its ports by the English navy. The government was severely criticized for not preparing adequately to meet these dangers. The navy's lack of preparedness was a major issue. See Israel 1995, ch. 31.

18. Wernham observes that in addition to its deputies, each of the eighteen towns of Holland sent a lawyer to the Provincial Estates. Many of the arrangements Spinoza prescribes for monarchies—many designed to limit the powers of the king—were (analogous to) features of the Dutch Republic. Temple 1972, ch. 2, is still very much worth consulting.

19. Zac notes that in the Dutch Republic the stadtholder, as representative of the sovereign in each province, had the right to choose the magistrates from each town from a list presented by the town.

jurist from one clan must be succeeded by one from another clan, only
 15 the names of jurists should be given the King. Counselors who have
 performed this office for the time prescribed cannot continue in it, nor
 can they be placed again on the selection list for at least five years.

The reason it's necessary to choose one Counselor a year from
 each clan is to prevent the Council from being composed of inexpe-
 20 rienced Novices one year, and the next year, of Old Hands, expert [in
 public Affairs]. This would necessarily happen if they all retired at the
 same time, to be succeeded by new Counselors. But if one is selected
 each year from each clan, then only a fifth, or a fourth, or at most a
 third of the Council will be Novices. Moreover, if other business, or
 25 some other reason, prevents the King from being able to find time for
 this choice, then the Counselors themselves should choose temporary
 replacements, till the King himself chooses others, or approves those
 the Council has chosen.

17. The first duty of this Council should be to defend the fun-
 30 damental laws of the state and to give advice about the things to be
 done, so that the King may know what he must decree for the public
 good. So the King will not be permitted to decide anything about any
 matter unless he has first heard the opinion of this Council. But if, as
 will generally happen, the Council is not of one mind, but has various
 opinions, even after it has discussed the problem two or three times,
 [III/302] the matter must not be drawn out longer. The differing opinions must
 be reported to the King, as we'll make clear in vi, 25.

18. It will also be the duty of this Council to promulgate the King's
 statutes and decrees, to take responsibility for what has been decreed
 5 about Public affairs, and to look after the whole administration of the
 state, as deputies of the King.²⁰

19. Citizens will have no access to the King except through this
 Council, to whom all claims and petitions are to be delivered, to be
 presented to the King. The ambassadors of other Commonwealths will
 10 also not be permitted the privilege of addressing the King, except by
 the intercession of this Council. Furthermore, Letters sent to the King
 from other places must be delivered to him by this Council. The King
 is absolutely to be considered as the mind of the Commonwealth; but
 the Council should be considered the mind's external senses, as it were²¹

20. Zac argues that in spite of its name this council is not merely advisory, but also
 exercises legislative and executive functions: "although in cases of disagreement, the king
 has the last word, the council basically has both legislative and executive functions. . . .
 Without using the word, Spinoza fundamentally recommends a parliamentary monarchy."

21. OP, Gebhardt, Proietti: *ceu*. NS: *of*. So Gfroerer, Wernham: *seu*. Akkerman recom-
 mends retaining the OP text.

the body of the Commonwealth, through which the mind conceives
 15 the condition of the State, and does what it decides is best for itself.

20. The responsibility for educating the King's sons will also fall to this Council, as well as their guardianship, if the King dies and leaves an infant or child as his successor.²² But so that the Council will not in the meantime be left without a King, a Senior Nobleman of the Commonwealth ought to be chosen to take the King's place, until his legitimate
 20 successor reaches the age at which he can bear the burden of rule.

21. The Candidates for this Council shall be those who know the government, the fundamental principles, and the situation *or* condition of the Commonwealth whose subjects they are. But anyone who wishes to fill the position of jurist must know, not only the government and
 25 condition of the Commonwealth whose subject he is, but also the government and conditions of the other Commonwealths with which their Commonwealth has some business. No one shall be eligible for selection unless he has reached fifty without being convicted of any crime.

22. In this Council nothing must be concluded concerning the affairs
 30 of the state unless all members are present. If someone is ill, or for some other reason can't be present, he must send someone else in his place, someone of the same clan, who has filled the same office, or been put on the selection list. If he doesn't do this, but compels the Council to defer discussing some matter till later, because of his absence, he shall
 [III/303] be fined some substantial sum of money. But this must be understood to apply only when the matter concerns the whole state, such as war and peace, or repealing or instituting some law, or commerce, etc. If the matter concerns only one city or another, or written petitions, etc.,
 5 it will be enough if a greater part of the Council is present.

23. For there to be equality between clans in everything, and yet an order of being seated, of making proposals, and of speaking, they must take turns, so that each one shall preside at one session, and the one who is first in one session is last in the next one. But of those from the
 10 same clan, the one who was chosen first should be first.²³

22. Spinoza here takes the republican side in a major controversy in the Dutch politics of his day. William III (1650–1702), Prince of Orange, was born only a few days after the death of his father, William II. He did not succeed to his father's position of stadtholder until 1672. In his early years he was raised by his mother, Mary Stuart (daughter of Charles I of England). After her death in 1660 Jan de Witt and other leaders of the Republic sought to gain control of the young prince's education, a move resisted by the family, but eventually successful. De Witt would have preferred to see the office of stadtholder abolished, but at a minimum he wished to see that the prince was brought up with a proper respect for republican values. See Troost 2005.

23. In the States General the chief delegates of the several provinces took turns presiding, for a week at a time (Wernham, *Zac*).

24. This Council will meet at least four times a year, to require an account of the administration of the state by the ministers, to learn the condition of things, and to see if anything further needs to be decided. For it seems impossible that so many citizens should continually devote
 15 themselves to public affairs. But because those affairs must nevertheless be dealt with in the meantime, fifty or more members must be chosen from this Council, who will take its place when the Council is adjourned, and who must meet daily in their chamber, which should be adjacent to the Royal chamber. In this way they may take responsibility daily
 20 for the treasury, the defenses of the cities, the education of the King's son, and absolutely all the duties of the great Council which we've just enumerated (except that they can't deliberate about new business which nothing has been decided about).²⁴

25. When the Council has convened, before anything is proposed in
 25 it, five or six or more Jurists from the clans first in order of precedence in that session should go to the King, to give him whatever petitions or letters they have, inform him about the state of things, and finally, learn from him what he commands them to propose in his Council. When they've received his instructions, they should return to the Council, and
 30 whoever is first in precedence should explain what they're to deliberate about. If some member thinks the matter important, they should not vote right away, but defer a decision to whatever time the urgency of the matter permits.²⁵

While the Council has adjourned to the appointed time, the Counselors from each clan will be able to ask about the problem separately. If the matter seems to them very important, they'll be able to consult
 [III/304] others who've occupied the same office or who are Candidates for the Council. If they can't agree among themselves within the appointed time, that clan will be excluded from the vote (for each clan will be able to cast only one vote).²⁶ Otherwise, the Jurist of this clan, having been

24. The system described in this paragraph was that of the States General, which met four times a year, and delegated the responsibility for day-to-day operations when it was not in session to a committee known as the Gecommitteerde Raden (Temple 1972, ch. 2).

25. Proietti notes a similar passage in More's *Utopia* (More 1995, 122–23). But More's rules have restrictions which go beyond Spinoza's. No matter can be debated on the day it is first introduced; none can be decided unless it has been discussed on three separate days; and the highest officials are prohibited from consulting with one another outside the popular assembly, for fear that they'll conspire to alter the government and enslave the people.

26. In the States General of the United Provinces, each province had only one vote (Temple 1972, 63). By giving each clan a vote, Spinoza's system gives the provinces larger in population more weight in the council's deliberations. He will argue for the fairness of this in vii, 18.

5 instructed, will present in the Council the opinion they have judged to be best, as will the other advisors.

If it seems to the majority, after they've heard the reasons for each opinion, that they should consider the matter again, the Council will again be adjourned until a time when each clan will declare what its
10 final opinion is. Then, when the whole Council is present, and the votes have been collected, any opinion which didn't get at least a hundred votes should be considered null and void. The rest should be conveyed to the King by all the Jurists who were in the Council, so that after he's understood the arguments on each side, he can choose the one he prefers.

The advisors should then return to the Council, where they'll all
15 wait for the King to hear, at the time he's appointed, which opinion he thinks ought to be chosen, from among those they brought him, and what he's decided must be done.

26. For administering justice another Council must be formed, composed entirely of Jurists. Their duty is to decide lawsuits and
20 punish criminals, but to do this in such a way that all their decisions are approved by the deputies of the great Council, who must decide whether due process has been observed and the decision made without favoritism.

If a losing party is able to show that one of the judges was corrupted by a gift from his opponent, or has any other common reason for friend-
25 ship toward his opponent (or for hatred toward the complainant), or finally, that the standard procedure for judging hasn't been observed, he is to be made whole.

Perhaps these principles couldn't be observed by those who, when they investigate crimes, are in the habit of proving the defendant guilty,
30 not so much by a process of reasoning from evidence, as by torture.²⁷ But here I'm considering only procedures for judging which are consistent with the best government of a Commonwealth.

27. There ought to be many of these judges, and an odd number of them, such as sixty-one, or at least fifty-one. Only one should be
[III/305] chosen from each clan, and then not for life. Each year a part of this Council should retire, and others equal in number should be chosen, who are from other clans and at least forty²⁸ years old.

27. In opposing torture as an investigative tool, Spinoza is siding with Hobbes (*Leviathan* xiv, 30) and Montaigne (see his essay "On Conscience" in Montaigne, *Essays*, II, 5).

28. OP: *quadragessimum*, forty. NS: *vijftig*, fifty. Gebhardt declares the NS "obviously erroneous." This seems not so clear, but Wernham and Proietti, who note the difference, accept the OP text. Though vii, 5, deals with the qualifications for a different kind of council, it does suggest that the NS text might be right.

28. In this Council no verdict is to be pronounced unless all the
 5 judges are present. If someone can't be present in the Council for a
 long time, either because of illness or for some other reason, someone
 else must be chosen to fill his place temporarily. In casting votes, each
 judge should indicate his verdict secretly, not speak it openly.²⁹

29. The pay of this Council, and of the deputies of the preceding
 10 Council³⁰ should be, first, the goods³¹ of those they condemn to death,
 and also of those they punish with a fine. Second, from each judgment
 they've made in a civil matter, they should receive a percentage of the
 damages from the party who has lost his case. Both Councils should
 15 share this sum.

30. In each city there should be other, subordinate Councils, whose
 members also ought not to be elected for life. Also, each year some
 part of these Councils ought to be selected from the clans living in that
 city. There's no need to pursue these matters more fully.

20 31. No regular payments are to be made to the military in peacetime.
 In wartime a daily payment should be made only to those who make
 their living by daily work.³² The commanders and the other officers of
 units should expect no other pay than the spoils they get from the enemy.

25 32. If a foreigner has married the daughter of a citizen, his children
 should be counted as citizens and inscribed in the list of his mother's
 family. Moreover, whoever is born of foreign parents, but born and
 brought up in the state, should be permitted to buy, for a fixed price,
 the Right of a citizen from the leaders of a clan, and be added to the
 30 list of that clan.

Even if the leaders, for personal gain, have accepted a foreigner as
 a citizen at less than the established price, no harm can come to the
 state from that. On the contrary, ways of increasing the number of
 citizens more easily must be thought up, so that a large body of men
 is brought together.³³ But it's fair that those who aren't added to the
 list of citizens should, in wartime at least, make up for their freedom
 [III/306] from military service by labor or by paying a tax.

33. Ambassadors who must be sent to other Commonwealths in
 peacetime, either to conclude a peace or to preserve one, ought to be

29. Secret votes were the rule in the Dutch Republic (Zac).

30. I.e., the members of the executive committee mentioned in §24, which provides day-to-day supervision of government functions.

31. OP: *sint primo eorum*. NS: *zijn voorerst de goederen der gener*. Recent editors seem to agree that the OP inadvertently omitted *bona*.

32. There's a fuller discussion of this, not obviously consistent with the passage here, in vii, 22.

33. Spinoza follows the advice of Machiavelli, *Discourses* ii, 3, favoring a liberal immigration policy (Zac).

selected only from the Nobles and have their expenses paid from the
 5 Commonwealth treasury, not from the King's private funds. [NS: But
 one must choose spies who will seem capable to the King.]³⁴

34. Those who frequent the court, and members of the King's house-
 hold, to whom he pays a salary from his private funds, are to be excluded
 from every ministry *or* office of the Commonwealth. I say "to whom
 10 he pays a salary from his private funds" to exclude explicitly from this
 group his bodyguards. For no bodyguards ought to keep watch on his
 behalf, in the court or before his doors, except citizens of that city,
 taking turns.

35. War ought to be waged only for the sake of peace, so that
 15 when it's finished, the weapons may be set aside.³⁵ When cities have
 been captured by the Right of war, and the enemy subdued, the
 peace terms must be set up in such a way that the captured cities
 don't have to be protected by a garrison. Either grant the enemy
 the 'power to buy the cities back for a price, once the peace treaty
 has been accepted, or (if that course leaves the permanent fear of a
 threat from the rear) destroy the cities completely and resettle the
 20 inhabitants elsewhere.³⁶

36. The King should not be permitted to marry a foreigner, but only
 either one of his blood-relatives or a citizen³⁷—provided, however, that
 if he marries a citizen, those most closely related to his wife by blood
 25 can't administer any office of the Commonwealth.

37. The sovereignty ought to be indivisible.³⁸ So, if the King has had
 a number of children, the eldest [male] should succeed by right. In no
 way should the rule be allowed to be divided among them, or passed
 on, undivided, to all or some of them—much less that a part of the

34. One factor contributing to the disaster which befell the Dutch Republic in 1672 was the poor quality of the intelligence the Dutch ambassador in London provided regarding England's intentions. Although Charles II and Louis XIV had agreed in 1669 to mount a joint attack on the Republic, the ambassador continued to reassure his principals in 1670 that England would adhere to the terms of the Triple Alliance of 1668. See Israel 1995, ch. 30.

35. A view which goes back at least to Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1177b9, 1256b23; *Politics* 1333a35. Similarly (Pseudo-)Sallust, *Ad Caesarem . . . Oratio* vi, 2.

36. The advice here is that given by Camillus to the Roman Senate, after the conquest of the Latin peoples, as reported by Livy viii, 13 (and repeated by Machiavelli, in *Discourses* ii, 23).

37. Wernham suggests that Spinoza's concern with the king's marrying a foreign wife may be prompted by the close ties between the House of Orange and the Stuart family in England. William II had married the daughter of Charles I, and might for that reason be thought prone to autocracy. In 1676 William III was seeking the hand of Mary, the daughter of the future James II. See vii, 24, and the annotation there.

38. Cf. Hobbes, DCv ix, 1; xii, 5; *Leviathan* xviii, 16.

30 rule be given to a daughter as a dowry. Under no circumstances should daughters be permitted to inherit the rule.³⁹

38. If the King dies without male children, his nearest male relative is to be considered the heir of the state, unless perhaps he has married a foreign wife whom he does not want to divorce.

39. As for the Citizens, it's evident from iii, 5, that each of them
[III/307] ought to obey all the commands of the King, *or* the edicts promulgated by the great Council (regarding this condition, see vi, 18 and 19), even if he thinks the commands quite absurd. If he doesn't obey, it will be right to compel him. These are the fundamental principles
5 of a Monarchic State, on which it must be erected if it's to be stable, as we'll demonstrate in the following Chapter.

40. As for religion, no houses of worship at all are to be built at the cities' expense, nor are any laws to be made about opinions, unless they're seditious and overturn the foundations of the Commonwealth.
10 So, if those who are permitted to practice their Religion publicly wish to build houses of worship, they may do so at their own expense. But the King should have his own private place of worship in the palace, to practice the Religion to which he's attached.⁴⁰

39. Spinoza's bias against female rulers contrasts with Hobbes' position on the succession in monarchies. See below, at vii, 25, and the passages cited there. Cf. also *Leviathan* xlii, 78a. Hobbes' greater receptiveness to female rule may be related to the fact that he was born during the reign of Elizabeth.

40. In the United Provinces the Reformed churches and their ministers were maintained at public expense. Members of other Protestant denominations could apply to the magistrates for permission to build their own church and hire their own ministers, without state support, provided they satisfied the magistrates that they taught nothing "destructive of civil society or prejudicial to the constitutions of their state" (Temple 1972, 104–5). "The question of which churches were allowed in Holland varied from town to town. It was not subject to a general rule either of the States General or of the provincial assemblies" (Jonathan Israel, personal correspondence, 3 March 2014).

Spinoza's design for a model monarchy excludes a national church, whereas his design for a model aristocracy provides for one. Cf. vii, 26, and viii, 46. It's unclear why Spinoza makes this distinction. The religion given state sanction and support in Ch. viii will have a very minimal creed, intended to include only principles common to all religions, and subject to restrictions aimed at avoiding sectarianism. Why this would be acceptable in an aristocracy, but not in a monarchy, is puzzling.

[III/307]

CHAPTER VII

[Demonstrating Methodically the Fundamental Principles Of a Non-tyrannical Monarchy]¹

1. Now that I've explained the fundamental principles of a Monarchic State, my intention is to demonstrate the same things in this chapter, in
15 proper order. The most important point is that it's not at all contrary to practice for these laws to be so firmly established that not even the King himself can repeal them. For the Persians were accustomed to worship their Kings as Gods, yet even their Kings didn't have the 'power to revoke laws once they had been established. This is evident from Daniel 6.² And nowhere that I know is a Monarch elected absolutely,
20 without any explicit conditions.

This is not contrary to reason, or to the absolute obedience owed the King. For the fundamental principles of the state must be regarded as the eternal decrees of the King. Indeed, his ministers obey him completely if they refuse to carry out any commands he gives which
25 are inconsistent with the fundamental principles of the state. We can explain this clearly with the example of Ulysses [*Odyssey* XII, 156ff.]. For his companions were carrying out his own command in refusing to untie him when he was bound to the mast of the ship and captivated by the sirens' song, even though he ordered them to do this in many ways, including threats. It's a credit to his wisdom that
30 afterward he thanked his comrades for having obeyed him according to his first intention.

Kings, too, commonly follow the example of Ulysses, and instruct their judges to practice justice without giving special consideration to anyone, not even the King, if he commands something in a particular case which they know to be contrary to the established law.
[III/308] For Kings are not Gods, but men, who are often captivated by the

1. Supplied from Letter 84.

2. On the Persians worshipping their kings as gods, see Quintus Curtius VIII, v, 11 (cited also in TTP xvii, 23). The reference to Daniel 6 is to vv. 8 and 15. From these passages (and Esther 1:19, 8:8) it appears that an edict written in the name of the king and signed by him was unalterable. But some have argued that this is "a folkloristic motif, not a Persian custom" (HCSB). The conclusion of the passage (6:25–27) contradicts the idea that the king cannot issue a decree altering one he has previously given.

Syrens' song.³ If everything depended on the inconstant will of one man, nothing would be firmly established. If a Monarchic state is to be stable, it must be set up in such a way that everything is done, indeed, only according to the King's decree, i.e., that all law is the King's will, as it has been made known, but that not everything the King wills is law. On this, see vi, 3, 5, and 6.

2. Next note that in laying the foundations we must pay the most careful attention to human affects. It's not enough to have shown what ought to be done; it's necessary especially to show how it can be done in such a way that men may still have valid and firmly established rights and laws,⁴ whether they're led by affect or by reason. For if the rights provided by the state, *or* public liberty, rest only on the weak support of the laws,⁵ not only will the citizens have no security that they'll maintain their liberty (as we showed in vi, 3), but even that support will be destroyed. For this is certain: no condition of a Commonwealth is more wretched than that of the best state, when it begins to totter—unless it falls at a single stroke and collapses into bondage (which really seems to be impossible). So it would be much better for the subjects to transfer their right unconditionally to one person than to agree to uncertain and empty *or* ineffective conditions for liberty, and thus to make the way ready for future generations to descend into the cruelest slavery.

But if I show that the foundations of a Monarchic state, as set out in the preceding Chapter, are firm, and can't be undermined without arousing the indignation of the greatest part of an armed multitude, and that from these foundations peace and security follow, both for the King and the multitude, and if I deduce these things from the common nature of men,⁶ no one will be able to doubt that these foundations are the best and true. This is evident from iii, 9; and vi, 3 and 8. That they have this nature, I shall now show as briefly as I can.

3. Cf. TTP xvii, 14. Note that although Spinoza is giving what he thinks of as a demonstration of the fundamental principles of a monarchy, he does not hesitate to argue from rough generalizations about human nature and from the practices of those who construct states.

4. OP: *juru*. The NS, to capture the ambiguity of the Latin, has a double translation: *rechten en wetten*.

5. The phrase here translated "the weak support of the laws"—*invalido legum auxilio*—echoes a passage in Tacitus' *Annals* (I, ii) describing the deterioration of Roman life under the principate of Augustus, when legal protections were formally maintained, but undermined by force, favoritism, and bribery.

6. OP, Gebhardt: *ex communi natura*. NS: *van de gemene natuur der menschen*. So Wernham, Bartuschat, and Proietti all read: *ex communi hominum natura*. Cf. III/276/3, 357/10, 359/5.

3. It's the duty of the sovereign, as everyone will admit, to know the situation and condition of the State, to look out for the common
 30 well-being of all, and to bring about whatever is useful for the majority of his subjects. But since one person alone can't review everything, and can't have his mind always alert, and concentrated on deliberation, and since he's often prevented from devoting himself to public affairs by illness or old age or other causes, the Monarch must have Counselors,
 [III/309] who find out what the situation is, give the King advice, and often take his place, so that the state, *or* Commonwealth, always has one and the same purpose.⁷

4. But because human nature is so constituted that everyone is most
 5 strongly disposed by his affects to seek his personal advantage, judges those laws most equitable which are necessary to preserve and advance his own interest, and defends another person's cause just to the extent that he believes it makes his own situation more stable, it follows that the Counselors chosen ought, necessarily, to be those whose personal
 10 situation and advantage depend on peace and the common well-being of everyone.⁸ To this end, it's clear that if some are chosen from each kind *or* class of citizens, that will be to the advantage of the majority of the subjects, because they'll have the greatest number of votes in this Council.

[It may be objected that] because this Council is composed of such a large number of citizens, it must be attended by many whose mentality
 15 is quite uncultivated.⁹ Still, this is certain: each of them will be shrewd and clever enough in matters he has long been passionately involved in. So if all the Counselors chosen have been busy with their own affairs without disgrace till their fiftieth year, they'll be capable enough to
 20 give advice about their own affairs, especially if there's adequate time for reflection in matters of great weight.

Moreover, it's far from true that a Council consisting of only a few members is not populated by such people. On the contrary, the majority consists of men of this kind, since everyone there tries to have dull
 25 colleagues, who will hang on his every word. That does not happen in large Councils.

7. I take this to mean that day-to-day policy must always be consistent with the fundamental goals of the state—peace, freedom, and security—not that there can't be flexibility in the more specific policies adopted as means to those ends, such as the decision to enter into a particular alliance, or to increase or decrease military spending.

8. That is, on all members of the political order whose policies they are giving advice about. (The next sentence implies that the Counselors are not assumed to take into account the interests of the members of other states.)

9. Though the objection considered here is common enough in anti-democratic literature, Hobbes might be the source. Cf. DCv x, 10; *Leviathan* xix, 9. If so, Spinoza may be using Hobbes to reply to himself. Cf. *Leviathan* xxv, 13.

5. Furthermore, it's certain that everyone prefers ruling to being ruled. "For no one willingly grants another the right to command," as Sallust observes in the first speech to Caesar.¹⁰ Hence it's evident
 30 that a whole multitude would never transfer its right to one or a few people, if its members could agree among themselves and not go from the kind of controversy generally aroused in large Councils to a rebellion. Indeed, a multitude freely transfers to a King only what it cannot have absolutely in its 'power, i.e., an end to controversies and speed in making decisions.

[III/310] The common practice of choosing a King to be better able to conduct war, on the theory that Kings are much more successful at waging war, is sheer stupidity. To wage war more successfully, people are willing to be slaves in peace—if, indeed, peace is conceivable in a state whose
 5 supreme 'power has been transferred, simply for the sake of war, to one man, who can best show his virtue, and what advantage they all have in him, by waging war.¹¹ On the other hand, the chief feature of a Democratic state is that its excellence is valued much more highly in peace than in war.¹²

But for whatever reason a King may be chosen, he by himself, as
 10 we've said [§3], can't know what's advantageous for the state. For this purpose, as we showed in §4, it's necessary for him to have many citizens as Counselors. And because there's no way we can conceive that there can be a solution to the problem they're being consulted about which will escape such a large number of men, it follows that no solu-
 15 tion conducive to the people's well-being is conceivable, except for the opinions this Council reports to the King.¹³ Thus, because the people's well-being is the supreme law, *or* the King's highest right, it follows that the King has the right to choose one of the opinions brought to him by the Council, but not to decree anything, or render any opinion, contrary to the intention of the whole Council. (See vi, 25.)

20 But if all the opinions brought up in the Council were to be reported to the King, it could happen that the King would always favor the small cities, which have fewer votes. For even if it should be laid down by a law of the Council that opinions were reported without their authors being named, still, they'll never be able to take precautions so well that

10. A slightly inexact quotation from (Pseudo-)Sallust's "Speech to Caesar on the State," i, 4. (See Sallust LCL, xviii–xix, 444.) Spinoza will cite this passage again in viii, 12.

11. Spinoza holds that these incentives make monarchies particularly prone to initiate wars. Cf. TTP, xvii, 15, 33; xviii, 18–19; TP vii, 20. Wernham notes that Hobbes defends the view criticized here. Cf. DCv x, 17.

12. Perhaps, as Dominguez suggests, an allusion to the fall of Jan de Witt, whose republican regime was a success in peace, but a failure in war.

13. Cf. TTP xvi, 30.

25 the information does not leak out. That's why it's necessary to establish that an opinion which did not receive at least a hundred votes should be considered null and void. The larger cities will have to defend this law with all their force.

6. Here, if I were not eager to be brief, I would show the other great advantages of this Council. Still, I'll mention one, which seems most
30 important: there can be no greater incentive to virtue than the common hope of achieving this highest honor. For we're all moved most powerfully by the love of glory, as we've shown fully in our *Ethics*.¹⁴

7. No doubt the majority of this Council will never have a disposition in favor of war. They'll always have a great zeal for, and love of,
[III/311] peace. Not only will they always fear losing their property along with their freedom, but new taxes are required for war, which they have to supply. Moreover, their children and relations, occupied with private
5 concerns, will be compelled to apply their zeal to arms and to go into military service. They can bring nothing home from that but unprofitable scars. For as we said (in vi, 31), the army is not to be paid any stipends, and (by vi, 10) it's to be formed only from citizens, no others.

10 8. Another important factor favoring peace and harmony is that no citizen may have any immovable goods (see vi, 12). As a result, the danger from war will be nearly equal for everyone. Once, among the Athenians, a law was passed prohibiting everyone from lending money at interest to non-residents. If such a law were passed, then to earn a
15 living everyone would have to work at a trade, or lend money to their fellow citizens. So they'd have to engage in business dealings which are either entangled with one another or require the same means to succeed. Thus the majority of this Council will generally be of one and the same mind concerning their common affairs and the arts of peace.
20 As we said in §4, everyone defends the cause of another just so far as he believes that in this way he makes his own situation more stable.

9. No doubt no one will ever consider trying to corrupt this Council with gifts. For if he drew one or two Counselors to his side, from such a
25 large number of men, that wouldn't do him any good. As we've said, an opinion which does not receive at least a hundred votes is null and void.

10. Moreover, once this Council has been established it won't be possible to reduce its members to a smaller number. We'll see this easily if we consider men's common affects. For everyone is moved most
30 powerfully by the love of glory, and everyone who is physically healthy

14. See III Def. Aff. 44 and the propositions cited there. Spinoza returns to this theme in vii, 10. Perhaps there is some tension between depending on and encouraging the desire for glory, which puts people at odds with one another, and creating economic arrangements designed to give people common interests, as in vii, 8.

hopes to extend his life into a long old age. So if we calculate how many have in fact reached the age of fifty or sixty, and if in addition we take account of the large number of the Council selected every year, we'll

[III/312] see that there can hardly be any who bear arms who aren't possessed by a great hope of achieving this dignity. So everyone will defend the right of this Council, as far as they can. Note that unless corruption creeps in gradually, it's easily prevented.

5 But because it's more easily conceivable, and less apt to cause envy, that fewer members should be chosen from each clan, than that fewer should be selected from only a few clans, or that one or two clans should be completely excluded, (by vi, 15) the number of Counselors can't be reduced to a smaller number, unless by this act a third, or a
10 fourth, or a fifth part is taken away. Such a great change is completely at variance with common practice. Nor ought we to fear that [the King] will delay, or be negligent in selecting Council members. Should there be a delay, the Council itself will make it good. (See vi, 16.)

11. So whether the King is led by a fear of the multitude, perhaps
15 to bind the greater part of the armed multitude to himself, or led by a nobility of spirit, to consult the public advantage,¹⁵ either he'll always endorse the opinion which has the most votes, i.e., (by §5), which is more useful to the majority, or he'll be anxious to reconcile, if possible, the inconsistent opinions brought to him, so that he draws everyone to
20 himself. He'll direct all his energy to this end, so that they'll know by experience what they have in this one man, as much in peace as in war. Indeed, when he most looks after the common well-being of the multitude, he'll be most his own master, and will have the greatest control.

25 12. The King by himself cannot control everyone by fear.¹⁶ As we've said,¹⁷ his power rests on the number of his soldiers, and especially on

15. OP: *Rex igitur, sive multitudinis metu ductus, vel ut sibi armatae multitudinis maiorem partem devinciat, sive animi generositate ductus, ut scilicet utilitati publicae consulat.* This might be read as presenting us with a threefold disjunction, and so some translators have treated it. But I think Spinoza meant to offer only two alternatives, with the first *ut*-clause intended to explain what the king may be led to do by fear of the multitude, as the second explains what he may be led to do from *generositas*. His insistence that the state rely on a citizen army includes a requirement that all citizens will be armed, and that this is an important constraint on the monarch's rule. Cf. vi, 10; vii, 2, 17.

16. Spinoza here endorses what Kavka has called "the paradox of perfect tyranny," i.e., the claim that it's impossible for there to be a regime in which the ruler is obeyed only from fear of punishment. (Given the approximate equality of power between different people, and their common vulnerability to countermeasures, a tyrant must have at his disposal some who will enforce his punishments for reasons other than the fear of punishment.) For a useful discussion, culminating in the conclusion that while rule by fear alone is possible in principle, it's likely to be highly unstable, and that real-world tyrants have often recognized this, see Kavka 1986, 254–66.

17. Perhaps the reference is to vi, 5–6, and 10, or to vii, 11.

their excellence and their loyalty, which will always be constant among men, just as long as they're united by need, whether this need is honorable or shameful. That's why kings more commonly spur their soldiers
 30 on rather than restrain them, and conceal their soldiers' vices more than their virtues,¹⁸ and generally, oppress the best, seek out the idle and those corrupted by extravagant living, recognize them, aid them with money or favor, reaching out to grasp their hands, blowing them kisses, and playing their slave in all things, to establish mastery over them.¹⁹

So for the citizens to be recognized by the King before all others, and
 35 remain their own masters, as much as the civil order, *or* equity, allows, it's [III/313] necessary for the army to be composed entirely of citizens, and that his Counselors be citizens. As soon as the citizens allow mercenary troops to be engaged²⁰—men whose trade is war and whose power is greatest when there is dissension and rebellion—they're completely reduced to
 5 subjection and lay the foundation for eternal warfare.

13. It's evident from what we've said in §§9 and 10 that the King's Counselors ought not to be chosen for life, but for three, four, or at most five years. If they were chosen for life, there would be a number
 10 of bad consequences: most citizens could hardly conceive any hope of achieving that honor. This would lead to great inequality among the citizens, and so to envy, constant grumbling, and finally, to rebellions. These would not be unwelcome to Kings eager to be the master. Moreover, because the Counselors would have no fear of their suc-
 15 cessors, they would treat everyone with great license. Again, the King would not be at all opposed to this. The more the citizens detest the Counselors, the more they'll cling to him and fawn on him.

Indeed, even a five-year term seems too long, because it doesn't seem impossible, in that length of time, to cause quite a large part of
 20 the Council (however large the Council is) to be corrupted by gifts or favors. So it will be much safer if every year two from each clan yield their seats and the same number succeed them—that is, if each clan is to have five Counselors—except in a year when a clan's jurist departs and a new member is chosen in his place.

18. Wernham sees an allusion here Tacitus' description of Vespasian's treatment of his soldiers, *Histories* II, lxxxii.

19. Here the allusion is to Tacitus' description of Otho's treatment of his soldiers, *Histories* I, xxxvi.

20. OP: *duci*. But Wernham, with reference to the NS, suggests reading *conduci*. The phrase here translated "mercenaries"—*milites auxiliares*—might suggest "auxiliary troops" in the Machiavellian sense, that is, troops under the authority of a foreign prince. Cf. above, vi, 10, n. 11. But I think Spinoza has in mind professional soldiers, who hire themselves out to anyone willing to pay their price. Cf. III/315/1.

25 14. No King can promise himself a greater security than one who
 reigns in a Commonwealth of this kind. For not only does a King
 quickly perish if his soldiers don't want him to be safe, but it's also
 certain that the greatest danger for Kings always comes from those clos-
 est to them. So the fewer the Counselors are, and the more powerful
 30 they consequently are, the greater the danger they'll transfer the rule
 to someone else. Certainly nothing terrified David more than the fact
 that his Counselor Achitophel had chosen Absalom's side [2 Samuel 15].

Moreover, if all 'power has been transferred unconditionally to one
 man, it can far more easily be transferred from that one to another.
 For two common soldiers undertook to transfer the rule of the Roman
 [III/314] Empire, and they succeeded (Tacitus, *Histories* Bk. I).²¹

I say nothing about the devices and shrewd tricks Counselors must
 use to prevent their being sacrificed to envy. They are too well known.
 No reader of History can fail to know that loyalty has commonly been
 the ruin of Counselors.²² For their own protection they are obliged to
 5 be shrewd, rather than loyal.

But if the Counselors are so many that they can't agree in the same
 wicked plan, if they're all equal to one another, and don't serve in this
 office for more than four years, they can't be a threat to the King,
 unless he tries to take away their liberty. If he does that, he offends all

21. Spinoza also cites this passage—specifically, *Histories* I, xxv—in ADN. XXXV, added to TTP xvii, 3.

22. Droetto suggests (rightly in my view) that Spinoza is already thinking of Antonio Pérez, whose *Relaciones* he quotes later in this section to make a different point. Pérez (1540–1611) was secretary of state of Castile under Philip II, and involved in a complex web of intrigue at the Spanish court. He persuaded Philip that his brother, Don John of Austria, the hero of the battle of Lepanto, and Philip's Governor General in the Netherlands, had been plotting with Juan de Escobedo, Don John's secretary, to overthrow Philip, and that the best way to thwart the coup would be to eliminate Escobedo. With Philip's approval, he arranged Escobedo's murder. It seems that Don John and his secretary had not been engaged in such a plot, and that Pérez had more personal motives for suggesting the assassination. In his role as an intermediary between Philip, Escobedo, and Don John, Pérez had been dealing dishonestly with all the parties, and Escobedo threatened to expose him. After the assassination, Philip learned the truth, and regretted authorizing it. He had Pérez imprisoned on a charge of treason, but hesitated to bring him to trial, because Pérez had documents which would embarrass him. Eventually Pérez escaped, first to Aragon, and then to France, where he spent most of his remaining years. In 1598 he published his *Relaciones*, where he presents himself a loyal servant of his master, done in by rivals at court, who envied the closeness of his relationship to Philip. This self-serving work was especially popular in Protestant countries, because of the unflattering light in which it portrayed Philip, who had, on anyone's account, sanctioned the killing of one of his subjects without due process. Pérez was a keen reader of Tacitus, whom he cites frequently. Spinoza owned the edition of the *Relaciones* published in Geneva in 1644. Extremely useful are Droetto, Méchoulán 1974, and Parker 2014. The Spanish original of Parker 2014, Parker 2012, has an appendix which does not appear in the English version, arguing that historians cannot and should not trust Pérez.

10 citizens equally. For (as Antonio Pérez notes quite rightly): “to exercise absolute rule is very dangerous for a Prince, very hateful to his subjects, and contrary to the laws instituted by both God and man. Countless examples show this.”²³

15 15. In the preceding Chapter, in addition to these foundations, we’ve laid others which yield great security to the King in his rule, and to the citizens in maintaining freedom and peace. We’ll establish these in their proper place. Before anything else I wanted to demonstrate the things pertaining to the supreme Council, which are of the greatest moment. Now I’ll pursue the remaining things, in the order I’ve set for myself.

20 16. There’s no doubt that the citizens are more powerful, and consequently, more their own masters, the larger their cities and the better fortified they are. For the safer the place they live in, the better they can defend their freedom, *or* the less they have to fear from an enemy, whether external or internal. And certainly the wealthier men are, the more they
25 naturally look out for their security. Moreover, cities which need another’s power to preserve them do not have a right equal to their protector’s. Insofar as they need the other’s power, they are subject to the other. For as we’ve shown in Chapter 2 [§§2–3], right is defined only by power.²⁴

17. For this same reason—that citizens should remain their own
30 masters and protect their freedom—the army must consist only of citizens, without exception. For an armed man is more his own master than one who is unarmed (see §12). When the citizens give their weapons to someone else, and entrust their cities’ defenses to him, they transfer their right to him unconditionally, and commit it completely to his good faith.²⁵ To this we may add human greed, which is most
[III/315] people’s chief motive.²⁶ For it’s not possible to engage a mercenary soldier without great expense, and citizens can hardly bear the cost of maintaining an idle army.

Moreover, everyone who has read history, sacred or profane,²⁷ knows that no one should be chosen to command a whole army, or a large

23. The passage Spinoza quotes (translating into Latin with some freedom) is in Pérez’s *Relación Sumaria de las Prisiones y Persecuciones de Antonio Pérez*, included in Pérez 1644, 207 (pp. 203–4 in Pérez 1715). A more literal translation would read: “the exercise of absolute power is very dangerous for kings, very hateful to his vassals, and very offensive to God and nature, as a thousand examples show.”

24. Cf. above, vi, 9.

25. Cf. above, vi, 10.

26. The *Ethics* mentions greed (in III P56S) as one of a group of five affects which are particularly noteworthy (the others being gluttony, drunkenness, lust, and ambition), but never, so far as I can see, gives it the prominence Spinoza accords it here. IV App. xviii comes close.

27. Returning to the theme of the importance of reading history, this time Spinoza makes it clear that the Bible is also a valuable source for our understanding of human behavior.

5 part of one, unless circumstances make it necessary. Then it must be
 for a year at most. Reason teaches nothing more clearly than this.
 For if you grant a man time enough to achieve military glory, and
 raise his name above the King's—or to make the army loyal to him
 by indulgence, liberality, and the other arts commanders use to make
 themselves masters and others their slaves—you entrust the power of
 10 the state completely to that man.²⁸

Finally, for the greater security of the whole state, I've added that these
 military commanders should be chosen from the King's Counselors, or
 those who've held that office, that is, from men who've reached the age
 15 when men generally prefer the old and safe to the new and dangerous.

18. I've said that the citizens should be divided into clans, and that
 an equal number of Counselors are to be chosen from each clan, so
 that the larger cities would have more Counselors, in proportion to
 the number of their citizens, and would be able to bring more votes to
 bear. This is equitable.²⁹ For the power of a state, and hence its right,
 20 are to be reckoned by the number of its citizens. I don't believe we
 can devise a more suitable way of preserving equality among citizens,
 because everyone is so constituted by nature that he wants to be reck-
 oned as belonging to his own kind, and distinguished from the rest
 by his origin.³⁰

25 19. Moreover in the state of nature there's nothing a person is less
 able to claim³¹ for himself and make himself master of than the land,
 and whatever is so attached to it that he can't conceal it or carry it
 off somewhere. Therefore, the land, and whatever is attached to it
 in that way, is in the highest degree the common property of the
 30 Commonwealth,³² that is, of all those who can claim it for themselves
 by their united forces, or of him to whom they've all given the 'power
 to claim it for himself. Consequently, the land, and whatever is attached
 to it, must have a value, in the eyes of the citizens, proportional to
 their need to be able to settle there and defend their common right,
 or freedom. In §8, we've shown what advantages the Commonwealth
 must derive from this.

28. Wernham invites comparison with Machiavelli, *Discourses* iii, 24, and Tacitus, *Agricola* 39 (to which we might add his *Annals* I, ii).

29. Implicitly a criticism of the constitution of the Dutch Republic, which gave equal representation in the States General to each province, independently of their population. Cf. vi, 25.

30. Accepting Wernham's emendation of the OP text, reading *quia* for *qui*.

31. Proietti corrects the OP's (and Gebhardt's) *vindicare* in this passage to *vendicare*. (It occurs also below in l. 31.)

32. Cf. vi, 12.

[III/316] 20. For the citizens to be as equal as possible—which is especially necessary in a Commonwealth—none are to be counted as Noble except the King’s descendants. But if every descendant of the King were permitted to marry *or* to have children, in the course of time they
 5 would grow to quite a large number. Not only would they be a burden to the King and to everyone else, they would also be quite frightening for them. Men who have too much leisure often spend their time contemplating wicked actions. It’s because of the Nobles that Kings are especially prone to wage war.³³ For a King surrounded by Nobles, there’s more security and tranquillity in war than in peace. But I leave
 10 these matters. They’re well enough known, as are the things I said in vi, 15–27. The main things have been demonstrated in this Chapter, and the rest are evident in themselves.

21. Everyone also knows that the Judges ought to be so numerous that a private person can’t corrupt many of them by gifts, that their
 15 votes ought to be secret, not open, and that they deserve compensation for their service.³⁴ But the custom everywhere is for them to have an annual salary. As a result they’re in no hurry to settle disputes, which often go on endlessly. And where the confiscation of goods is profitable to the King, often

20 it’s not right or truth which is considered in their inquiries, but the size of [the defendants’] fortunes; denunciations occur everywhere, and the richest are seized as prey; these proceedings are intolerable burdens; though excused by the necessity of war, they remain in peace.³⁵

Still, when Judges occupy their positions for two or three years at most, their greed is moderated by fear of their successors. Moreover,
 25 when the Judges cannot have immovable goods, but to make a profit must trust their money to their fellow citizens,³⁶ they’re forced to consider the citizens’ interests rather than plot against them—especially if, as we’ve said, there are many judges.

22. But we’ve said that the military are not to receive regular pay-
 30 ments.³⁷ For the army’s greatest reward is freedom. In the state of nature each person tries to defend himself as much as he can, simply for the

33. Cf. vii, 5, and the annotation there.

34. Cf. vi, 26–29.

35. Tacitus, *Histories* II, lxxiv. Spinoza has modified the quotation, which in Tacitus begins as a description of the behavior of one particular Roman general, Mucianus, and moves to a generalization about the decline of justice under Vespasian.

36. By the restriction assumed in §8.

37. Not quite what vi, 31, said: in peacetime no regular payments are to be made to soldiers; in wartime those who sustain their life by daily work should receive regular payment; officers receive only the spoils of war.

sake of freedom. No one expects any other reward for excellence in fighting than that he should be his own [master]. Now in the civil state all the citizens collectively ought to be considered as just like a man in the state of nature. So when they all fight for their state, they're looking out for themselves and devoting themselves to themselves. But [III/317] the Counselors, Judges, Officers, etc., are devoting themselves more to others than to themselves. So it's fair that they receive compensation 5 for their service. Moreover, in war there can be no more honorable or greater incentive to victory than the image of freedom.

On the other hand, if only some of the citizens are assigned to military service, with the result that it's necessary to grant them regular pay, the King will necessarily give them greater recognition than the others (as we've shown in §12). Of course, these will be men who know only the arts of war, men who in peace are corrupted by extravagant living, because they have too much leisure, and men, finally, who because of 10 their poverty think of nothing but plunder, civil discord, and wars. So we can say that a Monarchic state of this kind is really in a condition of war, that only the military enjoys freedom, and that the rest of the people are slaves.³⁸

23. I believe the things we said in vi, 32, about admitting foreigners 15 to citizenship, can be known without argument. Moreover, I don't think anyone doubts that those closely related to the King by blood ought to be kept at some distance from him,³⁹ and occupied with matters of peace, not war. This will bring them honorable achievements and the state tranquillity.

However, not even this has seemed sufficiently safe to the Tyrants 20 of the Turks. That's why they've felt it a matter of religious duty to kill all their brothers. We shouldn't wonder at this. The more absolutely the right to rule has been transferred to one person, the easier it is to transfer it from him to someone else (we've shown this by example in §14). But no doubt a Monarchic state like the one we conceive here, 25 in which there are no mercenaries, will have provided sufficiently for the King's well-being, if it's set up in the way we've described.

24. No one can dispute what we've said in vi, 34 and 35. Moreover, it's easily demonstrated that the King ought not to marry a foreign wife [vi, 36]. For apart from the fact that two Commonwealths, though

38. Wernham suggests that this passage "owes something" to Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* v. If so, Spinoza generalizes in a way Sallust doesn't.

39. Wernham takes TP vi, 33, to indicate that the king's near kinsmen should be made ambassadors to foreign countries. The story of Philip II's problems with Don John of Austria would be one example of the dangers posed to a king by a near relative who achieves military renown.

30 united in an alliance, remain in a state of enmity toward one another (by iii, 14), it's necessary to take special care that war isn't stirred up because of the King's domestic affairs. Because alliances by marriage are especially likely to produce controversy and dissension, and disputes between two Commonwealths are generally settled by the right of war, [III/318] it follows that it's disastrous for a state to enter into a close alliance with another state.

We find a fateful example of this in Scripture. For after the death of Solomon, who had married the King of Egypt's daughter, his son, Rehoboam, waged war very unsuccessfully with Shishak, the King of 5 Egypt, who completely reduced him to subjection.⁴⁰ Moreover, the marriage of Louis XIV, King of France, with the daughter of Philip IV [of Spain], was the seed of a new war.⁴¹ In addition to these, there are a great many other examples in history.⁴²

25. The form of the state should be kept one and the same. So there should be one King, of the same sex, and the sovereignty ought 10 to be indivisible. Moreover, what I said [in vi, 37–38]—that the King's eldest son should succeed to his father by right, or, if there are no male children, the closest male relative—is evident both from vi, 13, and because the choice a multitude makes of a King ought to be eternal, if possible. Otherwise it must happen that the supreme 'power of 15 the state often passes to the multitude, which is the greatest possible change, and consequently the most dangerous.

Moreover, those who maintain that because the King is Master of the state, and possesses [sovereignty] by absolute right, he can convey it to whomever he wishes, and choose as his successor whomever he wishes, and thus that the King's son is heir to the state by right⁴³—those 20 people are surely wrong. The King's will has the force of law just so

40. Cf. 1 Kings 3:1, 14:25–28; 2 Chron. 8:11, 12:9–12.

41. In 1667 Louis invaded the Spanish Netherlands, which he regarded as his wife's inheritance.

42. The complex history of Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon might also serve to illustrate the dangers involved in such alliances.

43. It's natural to think Hobbes is the target here, and he certainly did defend some of the views criticized: e.g., that the King can choose anyone he likes as his successor. Cf. DCv ix, 12, 13; *Leviathan* xix, 18–20. But he does not infer (a *non sequitur* in my view) that in cases where the King has not named a successor, the King's son inherits the throne by right. Hobbes thinks that in the absence of an express designation, custom controls. Where custom dictates that the eldest male succeeds, the eldest male succeeds. If custom favors a female, a daughter may succeed. Cf. DC ix, 14–17; *Leviathan* xix, 21. Where neither express designation nor custom settles the issue, we presume a preference for a child of his own, with sons preferred to daughters, but a daughter preferred to the children of other men (e.g., a brother or sister).

As Matheron observes (PR, 295, nn. 43, 44), Spinoza's position is that in a monarchy the eldest son does succeed his father by right (vi, 37). He just doesn't do so *by right*

long as he holds the sword of the Commonwealth. For the right of the state is defined only by power. So the King can indeed abdicate; but he can't hand over the state to someone else, unless the multitude, or its strongest part, acquiesces.

To understand this more clearly, note that children are their parents' heirs by civil right, not by natural right. For it's only by the power of the Commonwealth that each person is the master of certain goods. So by the same power *or* right by which it happens that a person's will concerning his goods is valid [while he is alive], by that [power *or* right] it also happens that his will remains valid even after his death, as long as the Commonwealth lasts. In this way each person in a civil order maintains the same right even after his death that he had while alive. The reason, as we've said, is that he can make a decision concerning his goods, not by his own power, but by that of the Commonwealth, which is everlasting.

Concerning the King the reasoning is completely different. For the King's will is the Civil law itself, and the king is the Commonwealth itself. So the King's death is, in a way, the death of the Commonwealth. The Civil order returns to the natural order. As a result, the supreme [III/319] 'power naturally returns to the multitude, who can therefore rightly make new laws and repeal old ones.⁴⁴ So it's evident that no one succeeds to the King by right except the one the multitude wants to be his successor—or in a Theocracy, as the Hebrew Commonwealth formerly was, the one God has chosen by a Prophet.

Furthermore, we could also deduce these things from the fact that the King's sword, *or* right, is really the will of the multitude itself *or* of its stronger part—or even from the fact that men endowed with reason never give up their right so much that they cease to be men and may be considered as no more than cattle. But there's no need to pursue these matters further.

26. Furthermore, no one can transfer to another his right of Religion, *or* of worshipping God. But we've spoken about this at length in the last two chapters of the *Theological-Political Treatise*; it would be superfluous to repeat here what we said there.

With this I think I've demonstrated clearly enough, however briefly, the foundations of the best Monarchic state. Anyone willing to carefully

of inheritance. He does so because the multitude has so willed, once and for all. (It is unclear why the multitude, in instituting a monarchy, must have made *that* stipulation.)

44. Wernham comments: "This means that the 'eternal election' of the king is always to some extent fictitious (cf. viii, 3), and that the original democratic sovereign is always lurking in the background."

consider how these foundations fit together will easily see their coherence *or* the proportion of the rule.⁴⁵

All that remains is to point out that here I'm conceiving a Monarchic state established by a free multitude. These things can be useful only
 20 to such a multitude. One which has become accustomed to another form of state won't be able to uproot the foundations they've received without a great danger of overthrowing the whole state and changing its structure.

27. What we've written may be ridiculed by those who think the
 25 vices common to all mortals belong only to the plebeians—those who think that

there's no moderation in the common people; that they're terrifying, unless they themselves are cowed by fear;⁴⁶

or that

the plebeians either serve humbly or rule proudly, like despots,⁴⁷

and that

there's neither truth nor judgment in [the plebeian class], etc.⁴⁸

45. *Eorum . . . cōbaerentiam, sive imperii analogiam*. I take Spinoza to be claiming that his foundations for a monarchic state are well-designed in that they give the king enough, but not too much, power—enough to provide security and order, but not so much that it compromises the freedom of the citizens. On this reading the idea of proportion would refer to the balance of power between the king and the multitude (as in the quote from Ferdinand in §30).

46. From Tacitus, *Annals* I, xxix (where unnamed members of Drusus' staff advise him to deal harshly with a threatened mutiny among the soldiers). Spinoza has previously cited this passage, without showing any disapproval, at E IV P54S. Here he seems to be criticizing Drusus' advisors for identifying as vices peculiar to the common people defects Spinoza thinks people in general suffer from.

47. Livy XXIV, xxv. Spinoza abridges and paraphrases a passage interesting enough to expand and translate. The Latin reads: *ea natura multitudinis est: aut servit humiliter aut superbe dominatur; libertatem, quae media est, nec struere modice nec habere sciunt; et non ferme desunt irarum indulgentes ministri, qui avidos atque intemperantes suppliciorum animos ad sanguinem et caedes iritent*. That is: "This is the nature of the multitude; they either serve humbly or rule proudly, like despots; they don't know how to moderately find the middle way of freedom, or to keep it. And generally there's no lack of men to minister indulgently to their anger, who stir up hearts greedy for intemperate punishment to bloody slaughter." Livy is commenting on a speech by Sopater, a Syracusan politician, who encouraged a mob to condemn to death the wives of two recently assassinated tyrants. Livy's account does suggest that these women were complicit in their husbands' crimes. But Sopater's speech unleashed the mob's anger against other victims whom Livy clearly regards as innocent.

48. Here Spinoza refers to a passage in Tacitus (*Histories* I, xxxii), in which Piso's oratory has incited the plebeians *en masse* (*universa plebs*) to call for the death of Otho and the conspirators. His quotation is not exact. In Tacitus (LCL II, 56) the text reads: *neque illis*

But everyone shares a common nature—we're just deceived by power
 30 and refinement. That's why we often say "When two people do the same
 thing, it's all right for the one to do it, but not for the other"—not that
 the act itself is different, but that the one who does it is.⁴⁹

Pride is what sets rulers apart. Men are puffed up when they hold
 office for a year. How can nobles not be proud, when they enjoy their
 honors for all time to come? But their arrogance is adorned with
 haughtiness, extravagance, wastefulness, a certain blending of vices, a
 kind of sophisticated folly, and a refined shamelessness. Each of their
 [III/320] vices, considered in itself, is disgusting and shameful, because then
 it's quite conspicuous. But [taken together], they seem honorable and
 becoming to the ignorant and naive.

Moreover [the reason] "there's no moderation in the common people,"
 [the reason] "they're terrifying, unless they themselves are cowed by
 fear," is that freedom and slavery are not easily combined.

5 Finally, it's no surprise that "there's neither truth nor judgment in
 the plebeians" when the rulers manage the chief business of the state
 secretly, and the plebeians are only making a guess from the few things
 the rulers can't conceal.

To suspend judgment is a rare virtue. So it's sheer stupidity to want
 to do everything in secrecy, and then expect the citizens not to judge the
 10 government's actions wrongly, and not to interpret everything perversely.
 If the plebeians could restrain themselves, and suspend judgment on
 matters they know little about, or judge things correctly from scanty
 information, they would be more worthy to rule than to be ruled.

But as we've said, everyone has the same nature. Everyone is proud
 15 when he's master; everyone terrorizes when he's not cowed by fear;
 and everywhere it's common for enemies and servile flatterers to bend
 the truth⁵⁰—especially when they're ruled despotically by one or a few
 men, who in their trials consider the size of the parties' wealth, not
 the right and the true.

iudicium aut veritas, which Moore renders "there was neither sense nor honesty in their demands." Spinoza's quote (perhaps relying on memory) reads: *nec ei veritas, aut iudicium*, which is what I have translated. Tacitus offers the following justification for saying that the plebeians showed neither sense nor honesty (to use Moore's translation): "On this very same day they would have clamoured for the opposite with equal enthusiasm, but they acted according to the traditional custom of flattering the emperor, whoever he might be, with fulsome acclamations and senseless zeal" (LCL Tacitus II, 57).

49. The quote is from Terence, *Adelphi* 823–25, where it is treated as proverbial.

50. Wernham notes an allusion here to the opening paragraph of Tacitus' *Histories* with its complaint that other historians, writing about the empire, did not serve the cause of truth well, for one of two reasons: either they hated the emperor and exaggerated his defects, or they wanted his favor and flattered him. Tacitus himself claimed in his *Annals* to write *sine ira et studio*, without anger or partiality.

28. Next, professional soldiers, accustomed to military discipline, and
 20 used to putting up with being cold and without food, usually scorn the
 crowd of citizens as far inferior to themselves: they couldn't storm a
 city or fight in open Battle. But no one of sound mind will say that
 for that reason the state is less successful or stable. On the contrary, no
 25 fair judge will deny that the most stable state is one which has enough
 power to defend its own possessions, but not enough to seek those of
 others, and which for that reason tries in every way to avoid war and
 to preserve peace.⁵¹

29. I confess that the plans of this state can hardly be concealed.⁵²
 But everyone else must confess with me that it's much better for the
 30 state's proper and true plans to be open to its enemies than for a tyrant's
 wicked secrets to be kept from his citizens. Those who can manage
 the business of the state secretly have it absolutely in their 'power to
 treat their own citizens as deviously in peace as they treat the enemy in
 war. That silence is often useful to the state no one can deny. But no
 one will ever prove that without it the state cannot stand firm. On the
 [III/321] contrary it's quite impossible to entrust the Commonwealth to someone
 absolutely and at the same time maintain your freedom. And it's sheer
 stupidity to wish to avoid a small harm by incurring the greatest evil.
 But this has always been the song they sing who covet absolute rule for
 5 themselves: that it is altogether to the state's advantage that its affairs
 be conducted in secret, and other things of this kind. The more these
 doctrines are cloaked in the mantle of utility, the more threatening the
 slavery they lead to.⁵³

30. Finally, so far as I know there's never been a state embodying all
 10 the provisions we've specified. Still, we could show by experience that
 this form of Monarchy is best, if we were willing to consider the causes
 of the preservation or overthrow of any state which is not barbarous. I

51. Wernham compares Spinoza with Machiavelli here, noting correctly that Spinoza favors "an inter-state equilibrium," like that Machiavelli describes as having been key to the stability achieved in both Sparta and Venice. But in the end Machiavelli does not advocate seeking this middle way. He thinks that the vicissitudes of life being what they are, such an equilibrium is impossible to find successfully, and can be pursued only by giving up the ambition to found a great empire. Someone organizing a republic from scratch should follow the Roman model, allowing easy immigration, population increase, and participation of the people in the military (*Discourses* i, 6).

52. Conceding a point to Hobbes, DCv x, 14. Méchoulán 1974 suggests that in this paragraph Spinoza may have been thinking of Pérez, whose knowledge of Philip II's secrets made his master tremble when Pérez was no longer in reach of his revenge. In addition to Escobedo's assassination, there were other killings (though we should probably not include the death of his son, Don Carlos, among them). See Parker 1995a, ch. 5.

53. A paraphrase of a passage in Tacitus (*Annals* I, lxxxi), which accuses Tiberius of disguising under an appearance of freedom his policies regarding consular elections.

can't do that here without making it very tedious for the reader. Still, there's one memorable example I don't want to pass over in silence.

15 The state of Aragon showed singular loyalty toward its kings, and yet kept its institutions unharmed with no less constancy.⁵⁴ As soon as the Aragonese had thrown off the yoke of slavery to the Moors, they decided to choose a King for themselves. But they had difficulty reaching agreement among themselves on the conditions of the kingship. So
20 they decided to consult the Pope⁵⁵ about the matter. On this occasion he showed himself to be truly Christ's vicar. He chastised them for not being sufficiently mindful of the example of the Hebrews and seeking a king so stubbornly.⁵⁶ But if they wouldn't change their minds, he advised them not to choose a king unless they had first established customs
25 both equitable and consistent with the people's mentality. In particular, he urged them to create a supreme council which would be an obstacle to the kings, as the Ephors were in Sparta, and would have an absolute right to settle quarrels which arose between the King and the citizens.

Following this advice, the Aragonese established laws which seemed to them most equitable. The supreme interpreter of these laws, and
30 hence, the supreme judge, would be the Council, not the King. They call this Council "the Seventeen," and its presiding officer "the Justice." The Justice and the Seventeen were not chosen by any vote, but by lot, for life. They had the absolute right to review and reject any judgment against any citizen whatever, whether made by other Councils, either Political or Ecclesiastical, or by the King himself.⁵⁷ So any citizen

54. In what follows Spinoza relies broadly on Pérez's *Relaciones* (139–48, 228, in Pérez 1644; 145–53, 221–22 in Pérez 1715) for an account of the institution of constitutional monarchy in Aragon. Pérez may not be an entirely reliable source, but Dominguez 1986b thinks the text gives a sufficiently precise account of the "General Privilege" Pedro III (r. 1276–1285) agreed to. In that agreement, the king promised to observe the rights of the nobility, to not prosecute anyone in virtue of his office, to convene the *Cortes* annually, and to allow "the Justice" to judge all cases brought to the *Cortes*. Droetto provides a detailed and instructive comparison of Spinoza's account with its source in Pérez. For helpful general background, see Elliott 1970. For an illuminating discussion of Spinoza's relation to Pérez, see Méchoulán 1974, 1984.

55. Wernham suggested that this pope was Gregory VII (r. 1073–1085). But Dominguez 1986b suggests that it was Alexander II (r. 1061–1073). Droetto notes that the vagueness of this passage about dates and persons indicates that the "history" is largely legendary. Giesey 1968 is a meticulous attempt to sort out fact from fiction.

56. Here Spinoza alludes to 1 Sam. 8 (discussed briefly in TTP xvii, 106), which generated much controversy in the early modern period. Though most naturally taken as an argument against absolute monarchy (as in Milton 1991, 13–14, 85), in *Leviathan* xx, 16, Hobbes construed it as a statement of the absolute right of kings.

57. When Pérez escaped to Aragon in 1590, he placed himself in the custody of the authorities there, knowing that he would have greater rights under the Aragonian constitution than he had in Castile. Frustrated by this maneuver, Philip had Pérez arrested by the Inquisition, on spurious charges of heresy and sodomy. He expected the Inquisition to

[III/322] would have the right to call even the King himself before this court. Moreover, at one time the members of the Council also had the right elect the King or to deprive him of his 'power.

Many years later King Don Pedro, known as the Dagger,⁵⁸ finally managed—by solicitations, bribes, promises, and all kinds of favors—to
 5 have this right rescinded. When he achieved this, he cut off his hand with a dagger in everyone's presence—or as I would find it easier to believe, wounded himself⁵⁹—adding that subjects are not permitted to select a King without shedding royal blood. Nevertheless, they abolished this right on the condition

that they could, and can, take up arms against any force by which anyone
 10 seeks to enter the kingdom to their detriment, indeed, even against the King himself and any future prince who might be his heir, if he enters (the state) in this way.⁶⁰

This condition, of course, didn't so much abolish the right as correct it. For as we've shown in Chapter 4, §§5 and 6, the King can't be deprived of his power of being the master by civil right, but only by right of
 15 war—that is, his subjects are permitted only to repel his force by force. In addition, they stipulated other conditions, which aren't relevant here.

These customs, supported by universal opinion, remained inviolate for an incredibly long period, with the Kings always showing as much loyalty to their subjects as the subjects did toward their King. But after
 20 the kingdom of Castile passed by inheritance to Ferdinand,⁶¹ who was

be more cooperative (which they were), and to confine Pérez more securely (which they did not). The transfer to the Inquisition led to riots, in which the Aragonians protested the assault on their kingdom's liberties. This forced the Inquisition to return Pérez to the civil authorities. Philip then mobilized forces on the border of Aragon, threatening an invasion if Pérez was not returned to the Inquisition. The authorities relented and prepared to obey. But further riots allowed Pérez to escape to France. Philip invaded, punished the leaders of the rebellion, and pushed through the Cortes a number of measures increasing his power in Aragon, including legal changes which made it harder for someone charged with treason to be protected by the privileges. See Parker 2014.

58. Pedro IV (r. 1336–1387), who abolished the privileges in 1348, but was forced to reinstate them in 1384. (See Dominguez 1986b and Droetto.)

59. It's unclear whether Pérez meant to claim that Pedro IV had *cut off* his hand, or merely that he had *cut* it.

60. Quoting Pérez 1644, 147 (p. 152 in 1715 ed.). Pérez's account is quite clear about the contractual nature of the agreement between the king and his subjects.

61. Ferdinand and Isabella were married in 1469. Ferdinand was then heir to the throne of Aragon, but did not become King of Aragon until the death of his father in 1479. Isabella was heir to the throne of Castile, and became Queen of Castile on the death of her half brother in 1474. Ferdinand then became King of Castile, not in his own right, but in the right of his wife. On her death in 1504 their daughter, Joanna, inherited the throne. Ferdinand resigned the throne of Castile, but acted as her regent for most of his remaining life until his death in 1516. Spinoza's allusion to Ferdinand's

the first of all to be called Catholic, the Castilians began to envy the freedom of the Aragonese. They never stopped urging Ferdinand to rescind those rights. But he was not yet accustomed to absolute rule and did not dare try anything. So he made this reply to his Counsellors:

- 25 Besides the fact that he had accepted the Kingdom of Aragon on conditions they knew, and had sworn a most sacred oath to preserve those conditions, and besides the fact that it is uncivilized to break a promise you've given, he had become convinced that his Kingdom would be more stable so long as the King's security was no greater than that of his subjects, so that the King did not outweigh his subjects, and the
30 subjects did not outweigh their King. For if either party turns out to be more powerful, the weaker party will strive not only to recover its former equality, but also to repay the other party for the harm it has suffered. So one or the other will fall.⁶²

These are indeed wise words. I couldn't admire them sufficiently if they'd been uttered by a King accustomed to rule slaves, not free men.

- [III/323] So after Ferdinand the Aragonese retained their freedom, not now by right, but by the grace of more powerful Kings, until Philip II, who oppressed them with a more fortunate outcome, indeed, but with no less cruelty than he did the United Provinces. And though Philip III seems
5 to have restored everything to its former condition, still the Aragonese, most of whom are led by their desire to flatter the powerful with lip service—for it's sheer stupidity to kick against the pricks⁶³—and the rest of whom are deterred by fear, have retained nothing but specious words of freedom and empty customs.

31. We conclude, then, that a multitude can preserve a full enough
10 freedom under a King, so long as it brings it about that the King's power is determined only by the power of the multitude, and is preserved by the multitude's support. And this was the only Rule I followed in laying the foundations of a Monarchic state.

eventual absolutism perhaps refers to his introduction of the Inquisition into Aragon, which the Aragonese bitterly resisted.

62. Spinoza is quoting a passage from Pérez's *Relaciones* (1644, 143) which the English translation of 1715 renders somewhat more exactly: "That besides his having inherited them on the same conditions [as] he possessed them, and having sworn to maintain them, on pain of the greatest of censures, which oath whosoever did break would have just cause to dread the judgments of God, and besides the faith due naturally to his word, which the most barbarous nations regard, he always observed it as a rule between king and subjects, that whensoever the balance was even, as to the kingdom's satisfaction, the kingdom would be permanent, and the king safe in the possession of it, and that when the balance was uneven, both would be always striving, not only to set it even, as it was before, but to rise above the other, and hence would ensue the ruin of one or both of them" (1715, 148–49).

63. Alluding to Terence's *Phormio* 77–78.

CHAPTER VIII

*That an Aristocratic state ought to be composed
of a large number of patricians; of its excellence;
that it comes nearer to being absolute
than a Monarchic State does; and for this reason
is more suited to preserving Freedom.¹*

1. So far we've discussed the Monarchic State. Now we'll say how an
20 Aristocratic State should be organized so that it can last. We've said that
a state is Aristocratic if the rule is not by one man, but by certain men
selected from the multitude, whom we'll henceforth call Patricians. I
say, expressly, *that certain selected men rule*. For this is the chief difference
25 between an Aristocratic and a Democratic state: in an Aristocratic State
the right to govern depends only on choice, whereas in a Democratic
state it depends chiefly either on some innate right or (as we'll say in
the proper place) on a right acquired by fortune.² So even if the whole
multitude of a state should be admitted among the Patricians, provided

1. From here on we can't appeal to Letter 84 to supply chapter titles. This title appears in the OP, but probably comes from Spinoza's editors, not Spinoza. Whether it fairly summarizes the contents of the chapter is a matter of disagreement. Cf. Wernham, 367, with Pléiade 1502–3.

The organization of this chapter is as follows: §1 defines what an aristocratic state is, and §2 determines the size of the patrician class from which the Supreme Council of the state is to be drawn; §§3–6 compare aristocracies with monarchies and democracies, arguing that aristocracies are more absolute than monarchies, though less absolute than democracies; §§7–19 describe the foundations of an aristocratic state, specifying that the Supreme Council is to be “its own master” (*sui juris*) as far as possible. This means that it has the unconditional right to make and repeal laws, appoint all public servants, and choose the patricians who are to replace those of its members who die. §§20–28 describe a smaller council, called the Council of Syndics, also drawn from the patrician class, and appointed for life, whose function is to oversee the actions of the Supreme Council, and in particular, to make sure that the laws the Supreme Council has enacted are obeyed. §§29–36 describe a second subordinate council, the Senate, which has executive functions and a regularly rotating, term-limited membership. Though the Senate makes initial decisions about war and peace, these decisions are subject to review by the Supreme Council. §§37–43 describe the judiciary, and §§44–45 the role of certain officials not chosen from the patrician class. The discussion of the foundations of the state concludes in §46 with prescriptions for a national religion which give specificity to the discussion of state-church relations in the TTP.

2. Spinoza will return to this topic in xi, 1. He apparently had not worked out consistent criteria for distinguishing between aristocracies and democracies. See the Glossary entries ARISTOCRACY and DEMOCRACY.

30 that right is not hereditary, and does not pass to others by some common
law, that state will still be completely Aristocratic, since no one except
[III/324] those who are expressly chosen is admitted among the Patricians.³ But
if only two Patricians have been selected, each will strive to be more
powerful than the other, and because each one has too much power
[for the other to conquer easily], the state will easily be divided into
two factions—and into three, or four, or five factions, if three or four
5 or five [Patricians] have power.⁴ But the factions will be weaker the
more the rule has been conferred on many people. From this it follows
that for an Aristocratic state to be stable, we must take account of the
size of the state in determining the minimum number of Patricians.

10 2. Suppose, then, that for a state of moderate size it's enough that
there be a hundred outstanding men on whom the supreme 'power of
the state is conferred, and who consequently have the right to select
their Patrician Colleagues when one of them dies. These men will of
course try in every way to have their children, or those most nearly
15 related to them by blood, succeed them. The result will be that the
supreme 'power of the state will always be possessed by those fortune
has given to the Patricians as children or blood-relatives. And because,
of a hundred men who achieve honors by fortune, it will be hard to
find three who are powerful and influential because of their skill and
judgment, the 'power of the state won't rest with a hundred men, but
20 with only two or three, who stand out because of the excellence of
their minds. They will easily draw everything to themselves, and in the
common way of human desire,⁵ each will be able to make a smooth
path to Monarchy for himself.

So if we make our calculations rightly, it's necessary for the supreme
'power of a state whose size requires at least a hundred outstanding
25 citizens to be conferred on at least five thousand Patricians.⁶ In this

3. The passage from III/323/23 ("I say expressly...") to III/324/1 ("...among the Patricians") is in the OP, but not the NS, which suggests that the Dutch translation was made from a Latin manuscript to which Spinoza subsequently made changes. Wernham notes that the town council of Amsterdam was recruited in this way, with new members being chosen by the old, when one of their number died. Cf. Temple 1972, 53–54.

4. Wernham notes that Van Hove cites the danger of factions as a great weakness of aristocracies. See Van Hove 1661, II, ii, 5, p. 286.

5. A number of translators (e.g., Wernham, Shirley, Ramond, Droetto, Dominguez) have specified that the desire leading to this result is ambition (defined in E III Def. Aff. 44 as an excessive desire for esteem). We might also think of it as a desire for power, which is perhaps more fundamental in Spinoza's psychology. Cf. E III P12. The same expression (*more humanae cupidinis*) is used in TP ix, 14.

6. Thucydides judged that the government of the Five Thousand at Athens in 411 was "a reasonable and moderate blending of the few and the many," producing a better government than Athens had ever had in his lifetime. (*The Peloponnesian War* viii, 97, noted by Van Hove 1661, III, iii, 4, p. 566.)

way the state will never lack a hundred men who stand out for their excellence of mind—assuming that of fifty men who seek honors and achieve them, there will always be one who is equal to the best, besides the others, who emulate the virtues of the best, and are therefore also
30 worthy to rule.

3. The Patricians are commonly citizens of one city, which is the capital of the whole state, so that the Commonwealth *or* Republic takes its name from that city, as the Roman republic once did, and as the Venetian, Genoese, etc. do now.⁷ But the Republic of the Hollanders takes its name from a whole province, with the result that the subjects of this
[III/325] state enjoy a greater liberty. Before we can determine the foundations on which this aristocratic state must rest, we must note the difference between a rule transferred to one person and a rule transferred to a large enough Council. The difference is very great.

5 First, as we said in vi, 5, the power of one man is quite unequal to the task of preserving a whole state. No one can say this (without obvious absurdity) about a large enough Council. For whoever affirms that the Council is large enough thereby denies that it's unequal to the task of preserving the state. So a King absolutely requires counsellors. But a
10 Council doesn't require anything of the kind.

Second, Kings are mortal, but Councils are everlasting. So the power of a state which has once been transferred to a sufficiently large Council never returns to the multitude. This is not true in a Monarchic state, as we showed in vii, 25.

15 Third, a King's rule is often precarious, either because he's a child, or sick, or aged, or for other causes of this kind [as noted in vi, 5]. But the power of a Council always remains one and the same.

Fourth, the will of one man is quite variable and inconstant. For this reason (as we said in vii, 1), in a Monarchic state every law is indeed the
20 King's will made explicit; but not everything the King wills ought to be law. This can't be said about a large enough Council. For since, as we've just shown, the Council itself needs no Counsellors, every declaration of its will ought to be law.

Accordingly, we conclude that a rule transferred to a sufficiently
25 large Council is absolute, or comes nearest to being absolute. For if there's any absolute rule, it's the rule which occurs when the whole multitude rules.

4. Nevertheless, insofar as this Aristocratic rule never returns to the multitude (as we've just shown), and there's no consultation with the

7. In TP ix Spinoza will discuss aristocracies with several principal cities, which do not take their name from one. (That is his preferred type of aristocracy.)

30 multitude in it, but absolutely everything the Council wills is law, we must in every respect regard this aristocracy as absolute. Consequently, its foundations must rest only on the will and judgment of the Council, not on the vigilance of the multitude, since they're prevented both from offering advice and from voting. The only reason its rule is not
[III/326] in practice absolute is that the multitude is terrifying to its rulers. So it maintains some freedom for itself. If it doesn't claim that freedom for itself by an explicit law, it still claims it tacitly and maintains it.⁸

5 5. It's evident, then, that the condition of this state will be best if it's so organized that it comes nearest to being absolute, that is, so that the multitude is as little to be feared as possible, and maintains no freedom except what must necessarily be granted it from the constitution of the state itself, which is therefore a right, not so much of the multitude itself, as of the whole state, which only the best claim and preserve as
10 theirs. In this way practice will most agree with theory, as is evident from viii, 4, and also evident in itself. For we can't doubt that the more rights the plebeians claim for themselves—as in lower Germany⁹ those Societies of artisans, commonly called *Guilds*, usually have—the less the state will be a possession of the Patricians.

15 6. The plebeians ought not to fear any danger of savage slavery from the fact that sovereignty is granted absolutely to the Council. For the will of a Council so large cannot be determined so much by immoderate desire as by reason. Indeed, evil affects pull men in different directions. They can't be led as if by one mind except insofar as what they desire
20 is honorable, or at least has the appearance of being honorable.

7. The chief thing to be observed, then, in determining the foundations of an Aristocratic state is that they depend only on the will and power of its supreme Council, so that the Council is its own master,
25 as far as possible, and that it's in no danger from the multitude. To determine foundations which depend only on the will and power of the supreme Council, let's consider the foundations of peace peculiar to a Monarchic state and foreign to this one. If, for the Monarchic foundations, we substitute other, equivalent foundations, suitable to an
30 Aristocratic state, and leave the rest as we've laid them down, there's no doubt that we'll have removed all causes of sedition—or at least this state will be no less secure than a Monarchy. On the contrary, it

8. The OP's *vendicat* is correct (Proietti, Akkerman). Gebhardt's "emendation" to *vindicat* is unnecessary. Similarly below at 326/9 and 13.

9. In antiquity "Lower Germany" (*Germania Inferior*) was a Roman province on the west bank of the Rhine, which included the Rhine from its mouth up to the mouth of the Obringa (either the Aar or the Moselle). The territory included modern Luxembourg, southern Netherlands, part of Belgium, and part of Germany.

will be more secure, and its condition better, the more it approaches nearer to absolute rule than a monarchic state, without harm to its peace and freedom (see §§3 and 6). For the greater the right of the supreme power is, the more the form of the state agrees with the dictate of reason (by iii, 5), and consequently the more suitable it is for preserving peace and freedom. So let's run through what we said in vi, 9, to reject the things foreign to this state and see which ones are suitable to it.

8. The first thing necessary is to found and fortify one or more cities. No one can doubt that. But it's particularly necessary to fortify the capital of the whole state, and the cities on its borders. For the capital has the greatest right, and ought to be more powerful than all the rest. Besides, in this state it's quite superfluous for all the inhabitants to be divided into clans.

9. As for the armed forces, since we don't need, in this state, to seek equality for all, but only among the Patricians, and especially since the power of the Patricians is greater than that of the plebeians, it's certain that the laws or fundamental rights of this state don't require that the army be formed only of subjects. But no one should be accepted as a Patrician unless he's well-versed in the military arts. This is especially necessary.

To keep the subjects out of the armed forces, as some wish, is sheer stupidity.¹⁰ For in addition to the fact that a military stipend paid to subjects remains in the realm, whereas whatever is paid to a foreign soldier is lost, the greatest strength of the state is weakened. For certainly those who fight for their altars and homes fight with singular courage.¹¹

From this it's also clear that they are no less mistaken who maintain that generals, colonels, captains, etc., ought to be chosen only from the Patricians. How courageously will soldiers fight, when you take away from them all hope of achieving glory and honors?¹²

On the other hand, to make a law that the Patricians are not permitted to hire a foreign army when the situation demands it, whether for their own defense and putting down sedition, or for any other reason you like, is not only ill-advised, but also contrary to the supreme right of the Patricians. On this, see above §§3, 4 and 5.¹³

Further, a general of an army, or of the whole armed forces, ought to be chosen only in war, and only from the Patricians. He should

10. This was the practice in Venice, which, as Machiavelli points out, did not end well (*Discourses* i, 6).

11. Proietti notes an allusion to Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* lix, 5.

12. OP, Gebhardt: *omnis gloriae et bonores adipiscendi spes*. NS: *alle hoop, om eer en ampten te verkrijgen*. So Wernham: *gloriam*.

13. Contrast Spinoza's disapproval of hiring mercenaries in a monarchy, at vi, 10. Wernham notes that the Dutch regents had hired mercenaries in times of crisis.

[III/328] have the command for a year at most, and not be continued in command or chosen again later. This law is necessary in a Monarchy, but especially necessary in this state. We said above [vii, 14] that it's much easier for rule to be transferred from one man to another than for it to be transferred from a free Council to one man. Nevertheless, it often happens that Patricians are overpowered by their own generals, with much greater injury to the Republic. Indeed, when a Monarch is removed, it's not a change of the state, but only of the Tyrant. But in an Aristocratic state this can't happen without the overthrow of the state and the loss of the most prominent men. Rome has given us the most grievous examples of this.¹⁴

However that may be, the reason we gave for saying that in a Monarchic state the Military ought to serve without a salary does not apply in a state of this kind. For since the subjects are kept both from Councils and from voting, they ought to be regarded as just like foreigners. So they ought not to be brought into military service on terms less favorable than those of foreigners. There's no danger here that the Council will give them greater recognition than the rest. But to prevent each one from unfairly valuing his own deeds, as is apt to happen, it's more advisable for the Patricians to decree a definite reward to the soldiers for their service.

10 10. The fact that everyone except the Patricians is a foreigner has another consequence: the fields, houses, and land can't be publicly owned, and leased to the inhabitants for an annual rent, without danger to the whole state. For if subjects who have no share in the state are permitted to carry their possessions wherever they want to, they'll quickly abandon all the cities in times of trouble. So the fields and farms of this state must be sold to the subjects, not rented—but on this condition, that each year they pay some part of the annual income, etc., as is done in Holland.

30 11. Having considered these matters, I proceed to the foundations on which the supreme Council ought to be supported and strengthened. We've shown in §2 that in a state of average size there ought to be about 5,000 members in this Council. So we must seek a way of preventing the rule from gradually falling to the lot of fewer men, and seeing, in fact, that the number of rulers increases in proportion to increases in the state. Next, we must see that as far as possible [III/329] equality is preserved among the Patricians, that matters are handled expeditiously in the Councils, that the common good is attended to,

14. The best-known example being the overthrow of the republic by Caesar. Cf. III/289/7–8 for a similar expression in a different context.

and finally, that the power of the Patricians, *or* the Council, is greater than that of the multitude, but in such a way that the multitude do
 5 not suffer harm by it.

12. The greatest obstacle to preventing [the rule from gradually becoming concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer men] is envy. For as we've said, men are by nature enemies—and however much they're united and bound by laws, they still retain their nature. That's the reason, I think, why Democratic states are transformed
 10 into Aristocracies, and Aristocracies, in the end, into Monarchies. For I'm quite convinced that most Aristocratic states were initially Democratic.

When a multitude, seeking a new place to live, found it and cultivated it, the whole multitude retained an equal right to command. No one willingly gives the rule to another.¹⁵ But though each of them may
 15 think it fair that [another member of the original multitude] possesses the same right against him that he possesses against the other, still, each thinks it unfair that foreigners who join them should have a right equal to theirs in a state they sought for themselves by their labor and appropriated at the cost of their own blood.

And the foreigners themselves don't deny this.¹⁶ Those who migrate
 20 there, not to rule, but to attend to their private affairs, think enough is granted them if only they're given the freedom to conduct those affairs in security. But in the meantime, the multitude is increased by the influx of foreigners, who gradually take on the customs of the native people, until at length they're distinguished only by the fact that they don't
 25 have the right to acquire honors. While the number of the immigrants grows daily, the number of citizens is for many reasons diminished. Indeed, often clans die out; some are excluded because of crimes; and many neglect Public Affairs because of a difficulty in their domestic affairs. In the meantime, the more powerful desire nothing more than
 30 to reign alone. So gradually the rule is reduced to a few, and finally, because of factions, to one.

To the causes mentioned, we could add others which destroy states of this kind. But because they're well enough known, I omit them. Now I'll show in an orderly way the laws by which the state we're discussing ought to be preserved.

15. Alluding again to (Pseudo-)Sallust's "Speech to Caesar on the State," i, 4. Cf. TP vii, 5.

16. The situation of the immigrants Spinoza describes in this paragraph would have been, roughly, that of the Amsterdam Jewish community in which he grew up. They had come there in search of religious liberty, and were content to be left alone to practice their religion. But in Spinoza's lifetime they had not generally assimilated in the way he describes. On this issue, see Bodian 1997.

13. The most important Law of this state must be the one which
 [III/330] determines the ratio of the Patricians to the multitude. For (by §1)
 the ratio between them ought to be managed so that the number of
 Patricians increases in proportion to increases in the multitude. By
 what we said in §2, this ratio ought to be about 1 to 50. That is, the
 5 disproportion between the number of Patricians and the number of the
 multitude should never be greater than that. For by §1, the number
 of Patricians can be much greater in proportion to the number of the
 people, and the form of the state still be preserved. The danger lies
 only in there being too few Patricians. How we ought to take care that
 10 this law is kept inviolate I'll soon show in its proper place.

14. In some places the Patricians are chosen only from certain clans.
 To establish this by an explicit law is very harmful. For besides the fact
 that clans often cease to exist, and that the others are never excluded
 without disgrace, it's contrary to the form of this state that patrician
 15 status be hereditary (by §1). Such a measure makes the government
 seem like a Democracy—as we've described a Democratic state in
 §12—where a very few citizens rule.

Nevertheless, to prevent the Patricians from selecting their own
 sons and blood-relatives, and hence to prevent the right of ruling from
 20 remaining in certain clans, is not only impossible, but absurd, as I'll show
 in §39. However, provided that they don't maintain this by an explicit
 law, and provided the rest are not excluded—that is, those who have
 been born in the state, use the native language, don't have a foreign
 wife, aren't disreputable or servile, and don't make their living in some
 25 servile occupation (among which are to be numbered wine sellers and
 pubowners, and others of this kind)¹⁷—the form of the state will still
 be maintained, and the ratio between the Patricians and the multitude
 will always be able to be preserved.

15. Furthermore, if it's established by law that younger men cannot
 be chosen, it will never happen that a few clans keep a hold on the
 30 right of ruling. So it ought to be established by law that no one can be
 on the list of candidates until he's reached the age of thirty.¹⁸

16. Third, it ought to be established that all the Patricians must
 gather at a certain location in the city at definite, fixed times, and that
 unless they've been prevented from attending this Council by illness or
 [III/331] some public business, those who haven't been present should be fined

17. Van Hove excludes the same classes. Van Hove 1661, III, iii, 4 (Wernham).

18. In Venice a noble became a member of the Grand Council at age twenty-five (Wernham).

a meaningful amount of money. Unless this is done, many will neglect their public responsibilities, out of a concern for their private affairs.

17. The function of this Council is to make and repeal laws, to choose their Patrician Colleagues, and to appoint all public servants. For
 5 whoever has the supreme right, as we've maintained that this Council does, can't give to someone else the 'power to make and repeal laws, without at the same time yielding his own right and transferring it to the person to whom he's given that 'power. Indeed, whoever has the 'power to make and repeal laws for even one day can change the
 10 whole form of the state. But [the sovereign] can temporarily transfer to others the administration of the daily business of the state, according to established laws, without surrendering his supreme right. Furthermore, if the public servants were chosen by someone other than this Council, then the members of this Council ought to be called wards rather than Patricians.

15 18. Some are accustomed to appoint a Governor *or* President of this Council, either for life, as the Venetians do, or for a time, as the Genoese do. But the precautions they take make it quite clear that this can't be done without great danger to the state. We can't doubt that in this way the state comes close to being a Monarchy. As far as we can
 20 conjecture from their histories, the only reason they did this was that before these Councils were established they had been under a Governor or Duke, as if they were under a King. So the creation of a Governor may indeed be a necessary requirement for a particular People, but it is not necessary for Aristocratic states generally.

19. Nevertheless, because the supreme 'power of this state is in the
 25 hands of this Council as a whole, and not in the hands of each of its members (for otherwise it would be the assembly of a disorderly multitude), it's necessary that all the Patricians be so bound by the laws that they compose, as it were, one body, governed by one mind. But the laws alone, by themselves, are powerless, and easily broken when
 30 their defenders are the very persons who can sin, and the only men who ought to take an example from the punishment, and punish their colleagues so that they may curb their own appetite by fear of the same punishment. This is quite absurd. So we must seek a means by which the order of this supreme Council and the laws of the state are preserved inviolate, but so that there is still as much equality among the Patricians as possible.

[III/332] 20. Having one Governor or President who also has a vote in the Council must lead to great inequality, especially because of the power he must be granted, to be able to perform his duties safely. So we can do
 5 nothing more useful for the common well-being, if we weigh everything

properly, than to create another Council subordinate to this supreme Council, composed of certain Patricians, whose only duty is to see that the laws of the state which concern the Councils and the Ministers of the state aren't violated. This Council should therefore have the 'power
 10 to call to judgment any delinquent Minister of state who has sinned against the laws concerning his ministry, and to condemn him according to the established laws. These men we'll henceforth call Syndics.

21. The Syndics must be chosen for life. For if they were chosen for a limited period of time, so that afterward they could be called to
 15 other public offices, we'd fall into the absurdity presented in §19. But to prevent their becoming too proud, because they hold this office so long, no one should be chosen for it who has not reached at least the age of sixty, and who has not served as a Senator. (On the Senators, see below [§§29–36].)

22. We'll easily determine the number of Syndics, moreover, if we
 20 consider that they're related to the Patricians as the Patricians collectively are related to the multitude, whom they cannot rule if they're fewer than the proper number. So the ratio of Syndics to Patricians ought to be the same as the ratio of Patricians to the multitude, that
 25 is (by §13): 1 to 50.

23. Furthermore, for this Council to perform its duties safely, some part of the armed forces must be allocated to it, which it can command to do what it wishes.

24. The Syndics and other public officials should not receive any
 30 salary. But they should receive a remuneration such that they can't administer the State corruptly without great harm to themselves. For we can't doubt that it's fair for the public officials of this state to be decreed compensation for their time. The plebeians make up the greater part of the state, and the Patricians look out for their security, while the plebeians have no concern with public affairs, but only with their private interests. On the other hand, because (as we said in vii, 4) no
 [III/333] one defends another's cause except insofar as he believes that he thereby makes his own situation more stable, affairs must be arranged so that the Public servants consult their own interests most when they look out most diligently for the common good.

5 25. So the Syndics, whose duty, as we've said [§20], is to see that the laws of the state are preserved inviolate, ought to be decreed the following remuneration: each Head of a Family who lives somewhere in the state, ought to pay them a small sum of money each year, say, a quarter of an ounce of silver, so that from that they can know the
 10 number of inhabitants, and what percentage of the total the Patricians are. Next, each new Patrician, as he is chosen, ought to pay the Syndics

some large sum, e.g., twenty or twenty-five pounds of silver. Furthermore, the fines the absent Patricians are obliged to pay—the ones not
 15 present when the Council was convened—ought also to be granted to the Syndics. In addition, a part of the goods of officials who have misused their office, who are bound to submit to their judgment, and fined a certain sum of money, or whose goods are confiscated, should be set apart for them, not, indeed, for all of them, but only for those
 20 who sit every day and whose duty it is to convene the Council of Syndics. (On this see §28.)

To make sure the Council of Syndics is always made up of the proper number, this must be the first question taken up when the supreme Council is convened at its customary time. But if the Syndics
 25 have neglected this, then it falls to the presiding officer of the Senate (about which we will speak [in §§29ff.]) to advise the supreme Council about this, to require the presiding officer of the Syndics to explain the cause of this silence, and to ask the supreme Council what its opinion of this is. But if he too has been silent, the case should be taken up by the presiding officer of the supreme court, or (if he too is silent)
 30 by some other Patrician, who should require a reason for the silence from the presiding officers, both of the Syndics, and of the Senate, and of the Judges.

Finally, so that the law by which younger men are excluded may also be strictly observed, it should be established that all those who've reached the age of thirty, and aren't excluded from the government by an explicit law, should see that their names are inscribed in a register
 [III/334] in the presence of the Syndics and that in return for a set price, they receive from them a mark of the honor they've received, that they be permitted to wear a certain decoration, granted only to them, by which they may be recognized and held in honor by everyone else.¹⁹

In the meantime it should be established by law, subject to a serious penalty, that no Patrician is permitted to nominate anyone in the
 5 elections unless his name is inscribed in the common register—and furthermore, that no one is permitted to refuse any office *or* service which he's been elected to perform.²⁰

Finally, so that all the absolutely fundamental laws of the state may be permanent, it must be established that if anyone in the Supreme Council makes an objection to some fundamental law—for example, about
 10 extending the command of some General of the army, or diminishing the

19. OP: *a reliquis*. But NS: *boven d'anderen*, suggesting *prae reliquis*, above everyone else (Wernham).

20. In Venice the refusal to accept certain magistracies was punishable by a fine (Wernham).

number of Patricians, or the like—that he is guilty of treason. Not only should he be condemned to death, and have his property confiscated, but there should be some conspicuous, public sign of his punishment,
 15 so that the memory of his crime may be everlasting.

But to stabilize the rest of the common laws of the state, it's enough if only it is established that no Law can be repealed, and no new Law made, unless first the Council of Syndics, and after that, three-fourths or four-fifths of the supreme Council, have agreed on it.

26. In addition, the right to convene the supreme Council, and to
 20 propose matters to be decided in it, should rest with the Syndics, who should also be granted first place in the Council, only without the right to vote. But before they're seated, they must swear by the well-being of the supreme Council, and by the public freedom, that they'll strive with the utmost zeal to see that the rights and laws of their country are kept inviolate and the common good consulted. When this has
 25 been done, they may make known, in an orderly way, through their secretary, the matters to be proposed.

27. To ensure that all the Patricians have equal 'power to make decrees and select public officials, and that all business is handled expeditiously, we must approve without reservation the procedure the Venetians follow. To nominate public officials they choose some of the members of
 30 the Council by lot; those members then nominate the candidates for each office; finally, each Patrician indicates by secret ballot whether he approves or rejects the person proposed. In this way no one knows afterward who voted which way. Not only does this give each Patrician
 [III/335] equal authority in making the decision, and get the business transacted quickly, it also means that each Council member is absolutely free to give his opinion without danger of ill-will. This is especially necessary in Councils.

28. The same procedure ought to be followed in the Council of the
 5 Syndics and the other Councils: the votes should be by secret ballot. Moreover, the right to convene the Council of Syndics, and propose the things to be decided in it, ought to rest with their presiding officer, who should meet daily, with ten or more other Syndics, to hear the plebeians' complaints and secret accusations about public officials, to
 10 arrest the accused, if the situation requires it,²¹ and also to convene the

21. OP: *accusatores, si res postulat, asservandos*. A puzzling passage. *Asservare* can mean either "to arrest" or "to keep safe, protect." In the only other place where it occurs in Spinoza's writings, III/265/6 (i.e., in ADN. XXXVI, attached to xvii, 37), it clearly means the former. At III/428 Gebhardt says that that's what *asservare* means in Spinoza, which seems a hasty generalization, given that we have only two occurrences, and only

Council before its regularly appointed time, if one of them judges that there is danger in delay.

But the presiding officer and those who meet with him daily ought to be elected by the supreme Council, and from the Syndics, not indeed for life, but for six months; they should not be able to serve again in their office until after three or four years.²² As we said above [viii, 25], the confiscated goods and monetary fines, or some part of them, ought to be granted to them. We'll say more about the Syndics in the proper place.

20 29. The second Council to be subordinated to the supreme Council we'll call the Senate.²³ Its function is to conduct public business, e.g., to publish the laws of the state, organize the fortification of the cities according to the laws, give instructions to the armed forces, levy taxes

one where the meaning is clear. But why would the presiding officer want to arrest the *accusatores* (accusers)?

The NS translator has: *de beschuldigten te beschutten*, "to protect the accused," also puzzling, for different reasons. Why protect the accused? Gebhardt conjectured that the NS translator was looking at a text which read *accusatos asservandos*, and mistranslated *asservandos*. This seems possible. But if an editor believes that it's right, why not emend the text? In the end, Gebhardt did. But at III/335 he retains the OP reading, and his *Textgestaltung* (III/428) says that if we do that, we must interpret *asservare* as meaning "to protect." His theory at that point was that the Syndics might need to provide protective custody for commoners so that they would feel free to make accusations against patricians (even though they could make those accusations anonymously).

Wernham argued that there would be no need to protect the accusers if their identities were kept secret. So he corrected to *accusatos*, and translated *asservandos* as "take into custody." Shirley and PR make the same emendation and translate similarly. Bartuschat (1994) follows the OP, without comment. Cristofolini (1985) also follows the OP in his text, but notes the controversy. Domínguez (1986b) points out that in his *Corrigenda* Gebhardt changed his mind, recommending (III/432) that we read *accusatos* for *accusatores*. He does not explain the change at that point, but in V, 175–76, he appeals to a passage from Van Hove as speaking decisively for the emendation. Domínguez' translation (1986b) assumes that what is at issue is the protection of accusers.

It seems not too difficult to imagine circumstances which would require the protection even of secret accusers. Their knowledge of certain facts might enable the accused to identify them, even if the Syndics tried diligently to keep their identity secret. But it also seems not too difficult to imagine circumstances which would require the protection of the accused. Accusations of having committed a serious crime might put them at risk of extra-legal punishment from unruly citizens. (Americans might think of the assassination of Oswald; the Dutch, of Cornelis de Witt.) In the end I think it's best to emend the text to *accusatos*, but to acknowledge its uncertainty.

22. The extra text which Gebhardt adds from the NS is probably, as Wernham suggested, a clarification of *continuari*. Proietti reaches the same conclusion, apparently independently. My translation assumes that the clarification is correct.

23. OP: *appellabimus*. The NS agrees with the use the future tense. Wernham suggested emending to *appellavimus*, "we have called," noting the prior introduction of the term *Senatus* at III/333/25, and observing that Spinoza's handwriting would make this kind of corruption of the text very easy. But subsequent editors have not followed Wernham here, and the change does not seem necessary. This is the sort of mistake we might expect to find in a manuscript whose author has not given it a final review.

on the subjects and allocate the revenues, reply to foreign ambassadors,
 25 and decide where ambassadors are to be sent.

But to choose the ambassadors themselves should be a function of the supreme Council. For it's especially necessary to make sure that a Patrician can be called to a public office only by the supreme Council itself, so that the Patricians aren't anxious to seek the favor of the Senate.

Moreover, all matters which change the present state of things in
 30 some way are to be referred to the supreme Council, such as decisions about war and peace. For decisions of the Senate about war and peace to be valid, they must be confirmed by the authority of the supreme Council. For this reason I would judge that the decision to impose new taxes is a matter for the supreme Council, not the Senate.

30. In determining the number of Senators, the following things
 [III/336] must be considered: first, all the Patricians should have an equally great hope of achieving Senatorial rank; nevertheless the Senators whose term has ended can serve again after a relatively short interval—in this way
 5 the state will always be governed by men who are experienced and tested—and finally, that among the Senators there should be many who are well-known for their wisdom and virtue.

The only way we can devise to achieve all these conditions is to establish by law that no one under the age of fifty should be admitted
 10 to the rank of Senator, and that four hundred (that is, about one-twelfth of the Patricians) be elected for a year. After their year has passed, they can be chosen again after two years. In this way, about one-twelfth²⁴ of the Patricians will always succeed to Senatorial office, with only brief intervals in their service. This number, combined with the number of
 15 Syndics, will certainly not be greatly surpassed by the number of Patricians who have reached the age of fifty.

So all the Patricians will always have a great hope of achieving the rank, either of Senator or of Syndic, and nevertheless the same Patricians,
 20 with only brief intervals in their service, will always hold the rank of Senator. By what we said in §2, the Senate will never lack outstanding men, of great judgment and skill.

Because this law cannot be broken without creating great ill-will among many of the Patricians, the only precaution needed for it to

24. OP, Gebhardt: *una circiter duodecima pars*. NS: *omtrent een vierde deel*. Wernham thought sense required the NS reading, and emended the Latin accordingly: *una circiter quarta pars*, “roughly a fourth.” He argued that in practice senatorial rank would be confined to 1,200 men, who would “serve in groups of 400, each group resuming office after an interval of two years.” Translators have been sharply divided. Ramond argues at length for retaining the OP reading. Though I find the question quite obscure, I accept that recommendation. Cf. ix, 6.

25 always remain in force is that each Patrician who has reached the age we've specified should show proof of this fact to the Syndics, who will put his name on the register of those destined to achieve senatorial office, and read it aloud in the supreme Council, so that with the others of his rank he may occupy a place reserved for such men in this
30 supreme Council, a place nearest to that of the Senators.

31. The remuneration of the Senators ought to be such that peace is more to their advantage than war. So one or two percent of the value of the imports and exports should be set aside for them. In this
[III/337] way, no doubt, they'll safeguard the peace as much as they can, and never be eager to prolong a war. The Senators themselves shouldn't be exempt from paying this duty, if some of them are merchants. For such an exemption can't be granted without a great loss to trade. I
5 believe everyone knows this.

Next, it must be established by law that a Senator, or someone who has served as a Senator, cannot serve in any military office, and that no one whose Father or grandfather is a Senator, or who has had Senatorial rank within two years, can be chosen to be a general or other high-
10 ranking officer (positions which, as we said in §9, are to be filled only in time of war). We can't doubt that the Patricians outside the Senate will defend these laws with the utmost vigor. So the Senators will always expect greater remuneration from peace than from war. They will never recommend war unless the most urgent necessity of the state requires it.

15 Someone may object that if the Syndics and Senators receive such great remuneration, Aristocratic rule will be as burdensome to the subjects as any Monarchy. But first note:

[i] that royal courts require greater expenses,

[ii] that these expenses are not made to protect the peace, and

20 [iii] that peace can never be bought at too dear a price.

Furthermore,

[iv] whatever is conferred on one or a few people in a Monarchic state, is conferred on many in this [Aristocratic] state;

[v] Kings and their ministers do not bear the burdens of the state with their subjects, whereas in this state that's what happens;

for the Patricians, who are always chosen from the richer citizens,
25 contribute the greatest part to Public Affairs; and

[vi] finally, the burdens of a Monarchic state don't arise so much from the royal expenses as from its secrets.

When the burdens of the state are imposed to safeguard peace and freedom, even if they're great, they're still endured, and borne because of the advantage peace brings. What nation ever had to pay so many and
 30 such heavy duties as the Dutch? But not only has this nation not been drained dry, on the contrary, their wealth has made them so powerful that everyone has envied their good fortune.

So if the burdens of a Monarchic state were imposed for the sake of peace, they would not weigh heavily on the citizens. But as I've said, the secrets of this kind of state are such that the subjects sink under the burden, because the virtue of Kings is worth more in war than in
 [III/338] peace, and because those who wish to rule alone must strive to their utmost to have poor subjects.²⁵

I pass over in silence now the points a very wise Dutchman, V. H.,²⁶ once made, because they're not to my purpose, which is only to describe
 5 the best condition of each kind of state.

32. Some of the Syndics, chosen by the supreme Council,²⁷ ought to sit in the Senate, but without the right to vote, so that they may observe whether the laws which concern that Council are followed properly, and so that they may make sure the supreme Council is convened when something must be referred from the Senate to the
 10 supreme Council. As we've already said [§26], the right to convene this supreme Council, and to propose the matters to be decided in it, rests with the Syndics. But before the votes are collected on such things, the officer then presiding over the Senate will indicate the state of things,²⁸ and give the Senate's opinion about the matter proposed, and what its reasons are. When this has been done, the votes are to be collected
 15 in the usual way.

33. The whole Senate should not meet daily, but like all large Councils, at some fixed time. Because the business of the state must in the

25. Wernham calls attention to Hobbes, DCv x, 2, which argues that the ruler's interests and his subjects' interests are necessarily aligned: it's in the ruler's interest for his subjects to prosper, and contrary to his interest for them to be poor. (There's a similar passage in *Leviathan* xix, 4.) Wernham comments that rulers don't always see what is in their interest, which is no doubt true. But Spinoza perhaps wants to make a less obvious point: that the ruler's interests and his subjects' interests are necessarily in conflict.

26. I.e., Pieter van Hove, apparently the principal author of Van Hove 1661. Wernham suggests that the intended reference is to I, i, 10–34, pp. 39–136, of that work, which argue for republics as preferable to monarchies.

27. Wernham notes that it's probably the *representatives* of the Syndics to the Senate, not the Syndics themselves, who are said to be chosen by the supreme council here. (*All* the Syndics are chosen by the supreme council, so it hardly seems worth saying, at this point, that the syndics are so chosen.)

28. Accepting Wernham's suggestion that a word like *indicabit* has probably been omitted inadvertently after *statum*.

meantime be administered, some part of the Senate must be chosen to represent it when it's been adjourned. The duty of this body should
20 be to convene the full Senate when necessary, to carry out its decrees concerning Public Affairs, to read letters written to the Senate and to the Supreme Council, and finally, to deliberate about matters to be proposed in the Senate. But to conceive all these things, and the organization of the whole Council, more easily, I'll describe everything more accurately.

25 34. As we've already said, the Senators should be chosen for a year. They ought to be divided into four or six groups. If there are four groups, the first should preside over the Senate for the first three months. If six, then for the first two months. When its term is up a second group should take the place of the first. In this way each group should take its turn in the first place in the Senate for the same period
30 of time, with the group first in the first months being last in the second months, and so on.

Furthermore, as many Presiding Officers should be elected as there are groups, and each of them should have a deputy, to take his place when necessary. That is, from each group two men should be chosen, one to be the Presiding Officer and the other his Deputy. The one who presides over the first group should also preside over the Senate in the
[III/339] first months. If he's absent, his Deputy should take his place. Similarly with the rest of the groups, the order being preserved as above.

Next, from the first group some are to be chosen, either by lot or by vote, who with their Presiding Officer and his Deputy should represent the Senate after it's been adjourned. They'll do this for the same length
5 of time that their group has the first place in the Senate. When their term has expired, an equal number must be chosen from the second group—again, either by lot or by vote—who with their Presiding Officer and his Deputy will replace the first group and represent the Senate. Similarly for the remaining groups.

There's no need for the supreme Council to make the choice of
10 those whom I've said should be selected, either by lot or by vote, for each two- or three-month period. (Henceforth we'll call these men "consuls.") For the reason we gave in §29 is not relevant here (and the reason we gave in §17 is even less relevant). It will be enough if
15 they're chosen by the Senate and the Syndics present.

35. As for their number, I can't determine that accurately. But this much is certain: there ought to be enough that they can't easily be corrupted. Even if they don't decide anything about Public affairs by themselves, they can still cause delay in the Senate, or what would be
20 worse, deceive it by proposing things of no importance and withholding

those of greater moment. I pass over the fact that if they were too few, the mere absence of one or two could delay the conduct of public business.

These consuls are created because large Councils can't spend time daily on the public business. So it's necessary to seek a middle ground
 25 here, and make up for the lack of numbers by the brevity of the appointment. If only thirty or so are chosen for two or three months, there'll be too many to be corrupted in that short a time. That's why I've also recommended that the consuls who replace the outgoing consuls be
 30 chosen only when they replace them and the outgoing consuls depart.

36. Furthermore, we've said that it's the duty of these Consuls to convene the Senate when some of them—even if it's only a few—have judged that it's necessary, to propose the matters to be decided in it, to adjourn the Senate, and to carry out its decrees concerning public business. Now I'll discuss briefly the procedure which ought to be followed, so that the discussions don't turn into long and useless disputes.

[III/340] The Consuls should deliberate about business to be proposed in the Senate, and what must be done. If the Consuls are all of one mind about it, then when the Senate has been convened and the question explained in an orderly way, the Consuls should say what their opinion
 5 is, and collect the votes in an orderly way, without waiting for any other opinion. But if the Consuls are divided, they'll have to first state in the Senate the position the majority of the Consuls defended. If that's not approved by a majority of the Senate and the Consuls, and the number of those who abstain or are opposed, taken together, is
 10 greater—as we've already pointed out, this ought to be established by secret ballot—then they should inform them of the second position, which had fewer votes than the first among the Consuls. They should proceed in a similar way with any other positions.

But if no position is approved by a majority of the whole Senate, the Senate should be adjourned till the next day, or for a short time,
 15 so that the Consuls can see, in the meantime, whether they can find other ways, which more of the Senators could accept. But if they don't find any such ways, or if a majority of the Senate doesn't approve what they've found, then each Senator's opinion must be heard.²⁹

If a majority of the Senate still does not approve any position, then a vote must be taken again on each position. This time not only the
 20 ballots of those voting "aye" are to be counted, as was done before, but also the votes of those abstaining and those voting "nay." If more are found to vote "aye" than either abstain or vote "nay," the position should

29. Wernham notes that the procedure up to this point is similar to that of the Venetian Senate, as described in Van Hove 1661 II, iv, 5, pp. 329–30.

carry. If more vote “nay” than either abstain or vote “aye,” it should fail. But if on all the positions the number of abstentions is greater than
 25 the number of “nays” or “ayes,” then the Council of Syndics should be added to the Senate, to vote with the Senators. Only affirmative or negative votes should be counted; those who can’t make up their minds should be omitted. The same procedure is to be followed concerning things which are referred to the supreme Council from the Senate. So
 30 much for the Senate.

37. As for the court, *or* tribunal, it can’t rest on the same foundations it did under a Monarchy, as we described it in vi, 26[–29]. For (by §14) it’s not consistent with the foundations of this state that any account be
 [III/341] taken of lineage or clans. Furthermore, Judges chosen only from the Patricians might indeed be kept from pronouncing an unfair sentence against one of their class by fear of the Patricians who succeed them, and might perhaps even be kept from punishing them according to their desert; but on the other hand, they would dare to do anything
 5 to the plebeians, and would plunder the rich daily.

I know that this is why many approve of the policy of the Genoese, because they choose their judges from Foreigners, not from Patricians. But to me, considering the matter in a general way, it seems absurd for Foreigners, not Patricians, to be called upon to interpret the Laws. For
 10 what are Judges but interpreters of the Laws? So I’m convinced that in this matter the Genoese considered the mentality of their people more than the nature of this kind of state. If we consider the matter in the abstract, we must find the means which agree best with the form of this state.

38. As for the number of Judges, the nature of this state doesn’t require any particular number. As in a Monarchy, so also here: the most important thing is that there should be more Judges than can be corrupted by any private man. For their duty is only to take care that one private person doesn’t wrong another, to settle disputes
 20 between private parties, whether they be Patricians or plebeians, and to impose punishments on offenders, even Patricians, Syndics, and Senators, if they’ve disobeyed laws binding everyone. As for disputes arising between the towns under the state, they must be settled in
 25 the supreme Council.

39. Furthermore, the principle governing the time for which Judges are to be chosen is the same in each state, as is the principle that some should step down each year. So, finally, is this principle: though there’s no need for each Judge to be from a different clan, it’s still necessary
 30 that no two blood-relatives sit on the courts at the same time. This rule ought to be observed in the rest of the Councils, except for the

supreme Council. There it's enough if the law governing elections states that no one may nominate a near relative, or vote for one, if he's nominated by someone else, and that in nominating public officials, two near relatives may not draw the lot from the urn.

[III/342] This, I say, is enough in the Council, which is composed of such a large number of men, and for which no particular remunerations are decreed. So there'll be no harm to the state from that. As we said in §14, it's absurd to make a law excluding the relatives of all the Patricians
 5 from the supreme Council. The absurdity is obvious. The Patricians couldn't establish that law without absolutely yielding their own right in this matter. So the defenders of this law would not be the Patricians, but the plebeians. This is directly contrary to what we've shown in §§5
 10 and 6.³⁰ Moreover, the main point of that law, which establishes that we must preserve the same proportion between the number of Patricians and the number of the multitude, is that the right and power of the Patricians must be preserved, so that they're not too few to be able to rule the multitude.

40. Furthermore, the supreme Council must choose the Judges from
 15 the Patricians, that is (by §17), from the very founders of the laws. The opinions they hand down, concerning both civil and criminal matters, will be valid if reached by the proper procedure and without favoritism. The law will allow the Syndics to investigate, judge, and decide whether these matters require redress.

20 41. The remuneration of Judges ought to be as we said in vi, 29: for each opinion they've handed down in civil matters they should get some percentage of the award from the losing party. As for sentences in criminal cases, the only difference is that the goods they've confiscated
 25 and the fines they impose for minor crimes should be set aside for them only—but on the condition that they should never be permitted to use torture to force anyone to confess.

This will be a sufficient precaution against their being unfair to plebeians and favoring the Patricians too much out of fear. For besides
 30 the fact that this fear should be moderated simply by greed, cloaked in the fine-sounding name of justice, there's the fact that [the judges] are many, and that they cast their votes secretly, not openly. So if anyone's angry because he has lost his case, he still has nothing he can impute to one person.

Next, the respect [of the Judges] for the Syndics will deter them from pronouncing an unfair sentence (or at least, an absurd one), and
 [III/343] prevent any of them from acting deceitfully—not to mention the fact

30. Which granted as much sovereignty as possible to the supreme council.

that in such a large number of Judges there will always be one or two
*whom the unjust dread.³¹

Finally, as far as the plebeians are concerned, they'll be adequately
protected if they're permitted to appeal to the Syndics.³² As I've said,
the law authorizes the Syndics to investigate, judge, and decide on
5 redress in matters involving the Judges. Certainly they'll never be able
to avoid being hated by many Patricians. On the other hand, they'll
always be in favor with the plebeians, whose applause they'll be anxious
to win, as much as they can. To that end they'll take any opportunity
10 they're given to reverse judgments which violate the laws of the court,
to examine any judge, and to impose penalties on those who are unfair.
Nothing wins the hearts of the multitude more than this.

It's not a problem that such examples can rarely happen. On the
contrary, that's a very good sign: when a Commonwealth regularly has to
15 make examples of wrong-doers (as we showed in v, 2), it must not be well
organized; and surely the most honored cases must be the rarest ones.

42. Those sent into cities or provinces as Governors ought to be
chosen from the Senatorial order, because it's the duty of the Senators
to take care of the fortification of cities, finances, armed forces, etc.
20 But those sent into rather remote regions won't be able to regularly
attend meetings of the Senate. So only those destined for cities in the
homeland ought to be called upon from the Senate itself; the ones
they want to send to more remote places should be chosen from those
approaching the age required for membership in the Senate.

25 Still, I don't think that in this way we'll have adequately looked out
for the peace of the whole state if we completely exclude the cities on
the periphery from the right to vote—unless they're all so weak that they
can be openly treated with contempt. But that's inconceivable. So the cit-
ies on the periphery must be granted the right of Citizenship. And from
30 each city, twenty, thirty or forty selected citizens ought to be enrolled
in the ranks of the Patricians. (The number should be greater or less in
proportion to the size of the city.) From these, three, four or five ought
to be chosen each year to belong to the Senate; and one should be made
a Syndic for life. Those who belong to the Senate should be sent, together
with the Syndic, as governors to the city from which they were selected.

31. The NS (beginning from the asterisk) has a fuller text, which reads: *die de gerechtigheid bemint, en voor de welk zy ontsach zullen hebben*, which we might translate: "who love justice and for whom [the unjust] will have respect/awe." Proietti suggests that those who will in the first instance have respect for the judges who love justice will be the other judges, and that as a result, the unjust will fear them.

32. The Syndics thus have a role analogous to that of the tribunes of the people in the Roman republic. Cf. x, 3 (Wernham).

[III/344] 43. Furthermore, the Judges to be set up in each city should be chosen from the Patricians of that city. But I don't consider it necessary to treat these matters more fully because they don't pertain to the foundations of this particular state.

5 44. Because the Secretaries in each Council, and the other ministers of that kind, don't have the right to vote, they must be chosen from the plebeians. But because their lengthy experience dealing with public affairs gives them an exceptional knowledge of how to conduct these matters, it often happens that more deference is given their advice than is due their rank, and that the condition of the whole state depends
10 chiefly on their direction.³³

This has been disastrous for Holland.³⁴ [The rise of a plebeian to power in an aristocracy] can't happen without arousing great envy among many of the elite. And of course we can't doubt that a Senate whose wisdom is derived, not from the advice of the Senators, but from that of their ministers, will be populated mostly by those who lack skill. The condition of this state will be not much better than that of a Monarchic
15 state in which a few Counselors of the King govern. On this, see vi, 5–7.

But a state will be more or less liable to this evil, depending on how well it has been set up. If a state does not have firm enough foundations, its freedom is never defended without danger. To avoid this danger,
20 the Patricians choose from the plebeians ministers ambitious for glory. Afterward, when affairs take a different course, these men are killed, as a sacrifice, to appease the anger of those who plot against freedom.³⁵

33. This is commonly taken to be a reference to two leading figures in the Dutch Republic, whose ability and industry gave them an influence far beyond the official powers of their positions: Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547–1619) and Johan de Witt (1625–1672). See Wernham, n. 409; Gebhardt V, 182–83; Dominguez 1986b, n. 196; Bartuschat 1994, n. 239. For the historical background, see Israel 1995, chs. 18, 19, and 29–31. Oldenbarnevelt served first as Pensionary of Rotterdam (a legal advisor to the town council, without a vote in its proceedings) and then, for thirty-two years, as Advocate of Holland, a similar position in a more powerful body. De Witt was first Pensionary of Dordrecht, and then Grand Pensionary of the States of Holland. During the crisis over the direction of the state church in the 1610s, Oldenbarnevelt sided with the Remonstrants, persuading the States of Holland not to agree to convene a national church synod. In the period when there was no stadtholder (from William II's death in 1650 till the coming of age of his son, William III, in 1672), De Witt was the leader of the Republic through two wars with England. Neither was a member of the nobility. Some have raised questions about this interpretation: see Zac 1987, 265, nn. 44, 46.

34. This may be a reference either to the crisis leading up to the Synod of Dort or to the events of 1672, "the year of disaster." See Israel 1995, chs. 18, 19, and 31.

35. In 1618 Maurice of Nassau, the Prince of Orange and stadtholder in five provinces, seized power. Oldenbarnevelt was tried by a special court and executed. In 1672, when the Republic was threatened by an invasion from the armies of Louis XIV, for which it was ill-prepared, DeWitt was brutally murdered by a mob in The Hague, perhaps at the instigation of his successor, the stadtholder William III.

Where the foundations of freedom are firm enough, the Patricians demand for themselves the glory of protecting it and make sure that the prudent direction of affairs is derived only from their advice.

25 These are the two things³⁶ we've particularly observed in laying the foundations of this state, which require that:

[i] the plebeians should be excluded both from the councils and from voting (see §§3 and 4), and thus that

[ii] the supreme 'power of the state should rest with all the Patricians, whereas

[iii] authority should rest with the Syndics and the Senate; and finally,

30 [iv] the right to convene the Senate, [to propose and discuss] matters [to be decided there] concerning the common well-being, [and to carry out the Senate's decisions], should rest with Consuls selected from the Senate itself.³⁷

If it's established, in addition, that

[III/345] [v] the Secretaries in the Senate or the other Councils should be chosen for four or five years at most, and that they should have an assistant, designated for the same period of time, who sometimes takes on part of the work, or if in the Senate there is, not one, but a number of Secretaries, of whom one is kept occupied with these matters, and another with those,

it will never happen that the power of the ministers will be of any moment.

45. The Treasury Officials should also be chosen from the plebeians
5 and should be required to give an account of their performance, not only to the Senate, but also to the Syndics.

36. I construe the phrase here translated "these are the two things" (*quae duo*) to refer back to considerations discussed earlier in this section, and not to the foundations about to be enumerated. I do not see a way of counting those foundations which makes their number come out two. The two considerations I take to be the tendency of ambitious commoners to seek (and acquire) more power than they should have in an aristocracy and the tendency of patricians to resent their assumption of such power. These motivate the decisions about the foundations necessary for a stable aristocracy. Most other translators seem to read this passage differently (e.g., Wernham, Shirley, Zac). But some, I think, agree (Ramond, Cristofolini).

37. OP: *et jus denique Senatum convocandi, resque, ad communem salutem pertinentes penes Consules, ex ipso Senatu electos, esset*. Clearly something has been omitted from the Latin. The Dutch text permits a reasonable, if approximate, conjecture about what's missing. NS: *en eindelijk het recht van de Staatsraad te beroepen, en van de zaken, tot de gemene welstant behorende, daar in voor te stellen, en daar af te spreken en te handelen by de Hoofden van de Staatsraad, uit de Staatsraad zelf verkozen, zou wezen*. Gebhardt inserted some of the Dutch version into his Latin text; Wernham and Proietti both attempt to reconstruct the missing Latin, with different results. My translation blends their suggestions, making use also of the description of the consuls' powers in viii, 36. The brackets indicate the language I've added.

46. In the *Theological-Political Treatise* we showed fully enough what we think about Religion. But at that time we did omit some things which that wasn't the place to discuss: namely, that

- 10 [1] all the Patricians ought to be of the same Religion, a very simple and most Universal Religion, such as we described in that Treatise.³⁸

For it's very necessary to make sure that the Patricians aren't divided into sects, some favoring one group, others favoring others, and that

- 15 [2] they don't, in the grip of superstition, try to take away from their subjects the freedom to say what they think.

Next, though everyone must be granted the freedom to say what he thinks, nevertheless

- [3] large assemblies ought to be prohibited.

Thus

- [4] those who are attached to another religion must certainly be allowed to build as many houses of worship as they wish, but these should be small, of some definite size, and at some distance from one another.

But it's very important that

- 20 [5] the temples dedicated to the national Religion be large and magnificent, and that only Patricians or Senators be permitted to officiate in their chief rituals. So

- [6] only Patricians should be permitted to baptize, to consecrate a marriage, lay on hands, and unconditionally be recognized as Priests, and as defenders and interpreters of the national Religion.

On the other hand,

- 25 [7] for preaching and administering the financial affairs of the church, and its daily business, the Senate should select some of the plebeians, who will be, as it were, the Senate's representatives;

- [8] for that reason they'll be bound to render to the Senate an account of everything they do.

47. These are the things which concern the foundations of this state.
30 I'll add a few others, which are less central, but still quite significant: namely, that the Patricians should go about in some clothing by which they can be recognized, that they should be greeted with some special title, and that each of the plebeians should yield his place to them. If

38. Referring to the doctrines of the universal faith in TTP xiv, 13–34.

one of the Patricians has lost his goods by some unavoidable misfortune, and can show this clearly, he should be made whole from the public
 [III/346] goods. But if it's established that he's squandered it through extravagance, arrogance, gambling, prostitutes, etc., or that he owes absolutely more than he can pay, he should give up his status and be considered unworthy of every honor and office. For someone who cannot manage
 5 his private affairs will be much less able to consult the public interest.³⁹

48. Those whom the law compels to swear will be much more careful to avoid perjury if they're commanded to swear by their country's well-being and freedom, and by its supreme Council, than if they're commanded to swear by God. He who swears by God pledges a private
 10 good, whose value he estimates;⁴⁰ but he who pledges the freedom and well-being of his country swears by the common good of all, whose value he does not determine. If he perjures himself, he thereby declares himself the enemy of his country.

49. Academies supported at the expense of the State are instituted not so much to develop native abilities as to keep them in check. But
 15 in a free Republic both the arts and the sciences are cultivated best if permission to teach publicly is granted to anyone seeking it, at the risk of his own resources and reputation. But I save these and similar things for another place. For here I had resolved to treat only those things pertaining to an Aristocratic state.

CHAPTER IX

[On Aristocracies with Several Cities]¹

1. Up to this point we've considered only the Aristocratic state which takes its name from one city, which is the capital of the whole state. Now it's time to treat aristocracies which have several cities.² I think

39. Here Spinoza endorses the policy of Tiberius, who held that because nobles needed to have wealth, the state might reasonably make good the losses of impoverished nobles, provided they had not brought their poverty on themselves by their vices. Cf. Tacitus, *Annals* II, 48.

40. The point seems to be that if a man is required to swear by a god in whom he does not believe, he will not fear divine punishment for lying. Wernham notes a similar thought in Hobbes, DCv ii, 21.

1. This editorial addition does not occur in either the OP or the NS, but is suggested by the first paragraph.

2. Wernham notes that Spinoza's model for this kind of state is the province of Holland, though some features are taken from the Dutch Republic as a whole.

these are preferable to the previous kind. But to learn the difference
 25 between them, and the ways each one is superior, we'll review the
 foundations of the preceding state individually, reject those alien to this
 kind of state, and lay down others on which it ought to rest instead.

2. The cities which enjoy the right of Citizenship, then, must be so
 30 established and fortified that none of them can make a stand alone,
 without the others, but also that none can secede from the others without
 great harm to the whole state. In this way they'll always remain united.
 [III/347] But those cities set up so that they can neither preserve themselves,
 nor be a threat to the rest [by secession], are not their own masters,
 but absolutely subject to the control of the other cities.

3. The things we showed in viii, 9 and 10, are deduced from the
 common nature of an Aristocratic state, like the ratio of the number of
 5 Patricians to the number of the multitude, and what ought to be the
 age and condition of those to be made Patricians. So whether the state
 has one city or several will make no difference about these things. But
 [where there are several cities] the nature of the supreme Council must
 10 be different. For if any City in the state were designated for meetings
 of this supreme Council, that city would really be the capital of the
 state. So either the cities would have to take turns, or some place would
 have to be designated for this Council which does not have the right of
 Citizenship, and which belongs equally to all the cities.³ In each case:
 15 easy to say, hard to do. Each solution requires many thousand men to
 frequently go outside their Cities, perhaps to meet now in one place,
 now in another.

4. But to draw the right conclusions about how this problem ought to
 be solved, and how the Councils of the state ought to be set up, given
 the nature and condition of this state, here's what we must consider:

20 [i] that the right of each City exceeds that of a private man as much as
 its power does (by ii, 4);

[ii] so each City in this state (see §2) has as much right within its walls,
or the limits of its jurisdiction, as it has power;

[iii] that all the cities are combined with one another and united, not as
 25 allies, but as constituting one state;

[iv] but in such a way that each city has greater right in the state than
 the others do just to the extent that its power is greater.

3. Wernham notes that originally the States of Holland and the States General met
 in different places at different times, but that after 1593 both bodies met in The Hague,
 which lacked political rights.

For to seek equality among unequals is to seek something absurd. The citizens are rightly thought equal, because the power of each one
 30 is negligible compared to the power of the whole state. But the power of each city constitutes a great part of the power of the state itself, and a greater part as the city itself is greater.⁴ So, the cities cannot all be considered equal, but as the power of each city ought to be reckoned from its size, so also ought its right.

The ties by which they must be bound, so that they compose one
 [III/348] state, are chiefly (by iv, 1) the Senate and the court.⁵ But how all the cities are to be united by these ties in such a way that each one's right nevertheless remains as great as it can be, I shall show here, briefly.

5 5. I conceive that in each city the Patricians, who ought to be more or fewer, in proportion to the size of the city (by §3), have the greatest right over their city. In the supreme Council of that city they have the supreme 'power to fortify the city, to expand its walls, impose taxes,
 10 make and repeal laws, and do absolutely everything they judge to be necessary for the preservation and growth of the city.

Moreover, a Senate must be created to deal with the common business of the state, on the conditions we mentioned in the preceding Chapter, so that between this Senate and the one described there
 15 there's no difference other than that this one has the authority to settle disputes between the cities. For in this state, which has no capital, the supreme Council cannot do this, as it does in [an Aristocracy which has a capital].⁶ (See viii, 38.)

6. Moreover, in this state the supreme Council⁷ is not to be convened
 20 unless it's necessary to reform the state itself, or in some difficult busi-

4. Implicitly a criticism of the distribution of power in the Dutch Republic. As Wernham notes (following Temple 1972, ch. 2), each city represented in the States of Holland, and each province represented in the States General, had only one vote. This gave the smaller cities a voice equal to that of Amsterdam in the States of Holland, and the smaller provinces a voice equal to that of Holland in the States General.

5. Although there were courts for each province in the Dutch Republic, as Wernham points out, there was no court for the Republic as a whole. That's why a special court had to be created to try Oldenbarnevelt, whose offense was deemed a crime against the whole state.

6. Wernham points out that the Dutch Republic sought to deal with this problem in 1588 by giving the Council of State the power to settle disputes between the provinces, on the theory that that body would be better suited to deal with such issues than the States General, whose members would be bound to assert the interests of the provinces they represented, citing De la Bassecour Caan 1866, 170.

7. The analogue of Spinoza's supreme council in the Dutch Republic would be what Temple called "the Assembly of the States-General," which because of its cumbersome size rarely met, its decision-making power being delegated to the Council of State, whose analogue in Spinoza's constitution would be the Senate (Wernham, citing Temple 1972, 61–62).

ness which the Senators believe themselves incapable of completing. So it will be quite rare for all the Patricians to be called into Council. For we've said that the principal function of the supreme Council is to make and repeal laws (Chapter 8, §17), and secondly, to choose
 25 ministers of state. But the laws, *or* common rights of the whole state, ought not to be changed as soon as they've been made.

Nevertheless, if time and circumstances require some new law to be established, or one previously made to be changed, the Question can be considered first in the Senate. After the Senate has agreed on it, it
 30 should next send representatives to the cities, who'll explain the Senate's decision to each city's Patricians. And finally, if most cities agree with the Senate's decision, it will remain valid. Otherwise, it will be null and void. This same procedure can be maintained in choosing generals for the army, in sending ambassadors to other governments, and in making
 [III/349] decisions whether to go to war or accept conditions for peace.

But in choosing the other ministers of state, a different procedure must be observed, because (as we showed in §4) each city ought to remain its own master as far as possible, and possess more right in proportion as it's
 5 more powerful than the others. The Patricians of each city must choose the Senators: that is, the Patricians of a city, in their Council, will choose from among their fellow Citizens a certain number of Senators, in a 1 to 12 ratio to the number of Patricians the city has (see viii, 30). And they'll
 10 designate the ones they wish to be of the first, second, or third rank, etc. In the same way the Patricians of the other cities will choose more or fewer Senators, in proportion to their own number, and distribute them into as many orders as we've said the Senate is to be divided (see viii, 34). So in each rank of Senators there'll be more or fewer Senators, in
 15 proportion to the size of each city.⁸ As for the presiding officers of the ranks and their Deputies, whose number is less than the number of cities, they must be chosen by lot, from those selected as consuls by the Senate.

The same procedure is to be retained in choosing the supreme Judges of the state. The Patricians of each city should choose from their col-
 20 leagues more or fewer judges, in proportion to their own number. The result will be that in choosing ministers each city is its own master, as far as possible, and the more powerful a city is, the greater is its right, both in the Senate and in the court, if the procedure in the Senate and
 25 the court in deciding matters of state and settling disputes is entirely as we described in viii, 33, 34 [37 and 38].⁹

8. As Wernham points out, the different provinces in the Dutch Republic were represented in the Council of State to some degree in proportion to their size, giving Holland a position which gave some recognition to its greater power.

9. Accepting Proietti's emendation, which seems clearly right.

7. Next, commanders of companies and other army officers ought also to be selected from the Patricians. Because it's fair that each city should be bound to assemble, in proportion to its size, and for the
30 common security of the whole state, a certain number of soldiers, it's also fair that each city should be permitted to select, from its Patricians, as many officers, commanders, standard bearers, etc., as are required for organizing the part of the armed forces they're supplying to the state, according to the number of regiments they're bound to support.

8. The Senate must also not impose any taxes on the subjects, but
[III/350] must call upon the cities themselves, not the subjects, to provide the funds necessary to carry out the public business it has decreed, so that each city must bear a greater or lesser part of the expenses, in proportion to its size. The Patricians of the city shall require that part from
5 the city-dwellers in whatever way they wish, either by assessing them according to their means, or what is much fairer, by imposing duties on them.

9. Next, even though not all the cities of this state are on the coast, and not all the Senators are drawn from coastal cities, nevertheless, we
10 can assign them the same recompense we mentioned in viii, 31. For this purpose we can devise means, in accordance with the constitution of the state, to unite the cities more closely with one another. Furthermore, the rest of the points we made in Chapter 8, concerning the Senate and the court, and the whole state, without qualification, are to be applied
15 to this state also. So we see that in a state which has several cities it's not necessary to designate a definite time or place for convening the supreme Council. But a place for the Senate and the court to meet ought to be set aside in a village or city which does not have the right to vote. Now back to the things which concern the individual cities.

20 10. The procedure of a city's supreme Council in choosing public officials for the city and the state, and in deciding on policies, ought to be the same as I indicated in viii, 27 and 36. For the reasoning is the same here as there. Second, subordinated to this Council, there ought to
25 be a Council of Syndics, which is related to the Council of the city as the Council of Syndics in Ch. 8 is related to the Council of the whole state, and whose function within the limits of the city's jurisdiction is also the same, and enjoys the same recompense. But if the city, and hence the number of patricians, is so small that it can create only one
30 or two Syndics, who cannot by themselves make a Council, then either the supreme Council of the city ought to designate Judges to assist the Syndics in their inquiries as circumstances require, or else refer the problem to the supreme Council of Syndics. For from each city some of the Syndics also must be sent to the place where the Senate meets,

to take care that the rights of the whole state are kept inviolate and to sit in the Senate, without a vote.

11. The Patricians of a city should also choose the Consuls of that
[III/351] city, who constitute, as it were, the Senate of the city. I can't determine the number of Consuls, but I don't think it's necessary, since the affairs of the city which are of great weight will be dealt with thoroughly by its supreme Council, and those which concern the state as a whole, by
5 the great Senate. Besides, if they're few, it will be necessary for them to vote openly in their Council, not secretly, as in the large Councils. For in small Councils, when the votes are cast secretly, someone who is a bit shrewder than the others can easily learn the author of each vote and outmaneuver the less attentive in many ways.

10 12. Furthermore, the supreme Council of each city must establish Judges, whose opinion can nevertheless be appealed to the supreme judgment of the state, unless the person's guilt is proven unambiguously and he confesses his guilt. But there's no need to pursue these matters further.

13. What remains, then, is for us to say something about cities which
15 are not their own masters. If these are built in the territory of the state, and their inhabitants are of the same nation and language, they must, like villages, be counted as parts of the neighboring cities, so that each of them must be under the government of some city which is its own master. For the Patricians aren't chosen by the supreme Council of the
20 state, but by the supreme Council of each city. In each city this Council has more or fewer members in proportion to the number of inhabitants within the limits of its jurisdiction (by §5). So the multitude of a city which is not its own master must be recorded in the census of a multitude which is, and must depend on its governance.

25 But as for cities taken by the right of war and added to the state, either they ought to be considered as Allies of the state, won over and put under an obligation by favorable treatment, or else Colonies should be sent there, which will enjoy the right of Citizenship (while the original inhabitants are sent elsewhere), or else the cities should be completely destroyed.¹⁰

10. OP: *At urbes jure belli captae, & quae imperio accesserunt, veluti imperii Sociae habendae, & beneficio victae obligandae, vel Coloniae, quae jure Civitatis gaudeant, eo mittendae, & gens alio ducenda, vel omnino delenda est.* If this text is correct, it says that it's the conquered people who, on the third option, are to be completely destroyed, a view Gebhardt thought too monstrously genocidal for Spinoza to have held, even in the age of the Thirty Years War. The NS renders the concluding clauses of this sentence *en het volk enders zenden, of de plaatsen gantschelijke uitroepen*. So the Dutch translator thought it was the cities which were to be destroyed, not their inhabitants. It's unclear what Latin text he had in front of him, but that policy would be more consistent both with an earlier passage in the TP

14. These are the matters which concern the foundations of this
 30 state. That its condition is better than that of [an Aristocratic state]
 which takes its name from only one city, I infer from the fact that
 the Patricians of each city, having the usual human desires, will be
 eager to retain their right, both in the city and in the Senate, and if
 possible, to increase it. So they'll strive, as much as they can, to draw
 the multitude to them, and consequently to move the state more by
 [III/352] benefits than by fear, and to increase their own number. Of course,
 the more of them there are, the more Senators they'll elect from their
 Council (by ix, 6), and as a result (by ix, 6, again), the more right
 they'll have in the state.

It's no objection that, while each city consults its own interest and
 5 is jealous of the others, they frequently quarrel with one another and
 waste time arguing. Some will remind us of the saying "while the
 Romans deliberate, Saguntum is lost."¹¹ On the other hand, when the
 few decide everything, simply on the basis of their own affects, freedom
 and the common good are lost. For human wits are too sluggish to
 penetrate everything right away. But by asking advice, listening, and
 10 arguing, they're sharpened. When people try all means, in the end
 they find ways to the things they want which everyone approves, and
 no one had ever thought of before. [NS: We've seen many examples
 of this in Holland.]¹²

But if someone retorts that this state of the Hollanders has not
 lasted long without a Count, or a Representative who could act in his
 place,¹³ I would reply: the Hollanders thought that to maintain¹⁴ their

(vi, 35), and with various passages in Machiavelli dealing with this issue. Cf. *The Prince* iii and v, and the *Discourses* ii, 23. So I follow Wernham's emendation, which makes the last phrase *vel omnino delendae sunt*, with the implicit subject taken to be *urbes*. PR reach the same conclusion.

11. A proverbial expression, going back to Livy XXI, vii, where it refers to the Romans' loss of Saguntum to Hannibal in the First Punic War, attributed to their indecision about how to respond to the threat he posed. Wernham notes that Van Hove frequently cites this maxim: e.g., in Van Hove 1661, I, i, 9, p. 38—where it occurs in a list of advantages monarchies are supposed to have over other forms of government—and in Van Hove 1661, II, i, 3, p. 271.

12. This sentence appears in the NS, but is omitted in the OP.

13. "Count of Holland" was one of Philip II's titles, inherited from his father, Charles V. See Van Gelderen 1992, 1. The representative(s) of the Count are perhaps the provincial governors, or the stadtholders, chosen from among the principal nobles, who were the Hapsburg ruler's chief representatives in the provinces. Cf. Israel 1995, 37. That seems to have been the view of the NS translator, who renders *vicarius* by *stadhouder* here. But perhaps Spinoza is thinking of the various governors-general Philip appointed to govern in his name when he returned to Spain in 1559. Cf. Van Gelderen 1992, 19–20.

14. Wernham has "gain" for *obtinere* here, but I think Shirley is right to translate "maintain." Linguistically either is possible, but Matheron argues persuasively for a version of this reading in a note in PR, 307. In favor of "maintain" is the fact that when he

15 freedom it was enough to renounce their Count and cut the head off the body of the state. They didn't think about reforming it, but left all its members as they'd been set up before, so that Holland¹⁵ remained a county without a Count, or a body without a head, and the state itself remained without a name.

So it's not at all strange that most subjects didn't know who possessed
20 the supreme 'power of the state.'¹⁶ Even if this hadn't been so, those who really had the authority were far too few to be able to govern the multitude and overcome powerful opponents. The result was that their opponents were often able to plot against them with impunity and eventually to overthrow them. The sudden overthrow of the Republic
25 did not result from the fact that it wasted time in useless deliberations, but from the defective constitution of the state and the small number of its regents.¹⁷

15. Another reason an Aristocratic state where several cities share the rule is to be preferred to one where they don't is that there's no
30 need, as in Ch. 8, to guard against its general supreme Council being overpowered by a sudden attack, since (by ix, 9) there's no time or place designated for convening it.¹⁸

Furthermore, in this state powerful citizens are less to be feared. For where several cities enjoy freedom, it's not enough for someone who's trying to get control to occupy one city, in order to secure rule over the rest.

[III/353] Finally in this state freedom is common to more men. For where one city alone rules, the good of the others is considered only insofar as it serves the interests of the ruling city.

succeeded Charles, Philip took the traditional oath promising to preserve the liberties of the people, and that Dutch political protests characteristically cast their struggle as an attempt to preserve their liberties, not to acquire liberty. Cf. Van Gelderen 1992, *passim*, and in the TTP xviii, 36, and the document cited there.

15. OP: *Hollandiae*. NS: *Hollant* (= *Hollandia*). Proietti and Cristofolini retain the OP reading, but Wernham, Shirley, and Bartuschat follow the NS, correctly in my view.

16. This seems difficult to reconcile with TTP xviii, 36, which claims that it was generally known that sovereignty in the Netherlands resided in the states of the several provinces.

17. Van Hove had been concerned about the small size of the aristocracy, and predicted a revolution because of the disproportion between rulers and subjects (Wernham). He strongly opposed the *dominatio paucorum*. Cf. Van Hove 1661, II, ii, 6, p. 291.

18. Van Hove had argued that an enemy who captured the assembly-place of a republic had that republic in his power (Wernham). See Van Hove 1661, II, i, 3, p. 267.

CHAPTER X

*[On the Fall of Aristocracies]*¹

5 1. Now that we've explained and shown the foundations of each kind of Aristocratic state, it remains to ask whether they can, from some inherent defect, be dissolved or changed into another form. The primary cause for the dissolution of states of this kind is the one that most acute Florentine² noted in Bk. III, Disc. i, of his *Discourses on*
 10 *Titus Livy*, namely that in the state, as in the human body, "something is added daily which eventually requires treatment."³ So it's necessary, he says, that at some time something happens which returns a state to the principle on which it was established. If this return doesn't happen when it should, the defects [of the state] increase to the point where they can't be removed unless the state itself is removed with them. The
 15 return, he says, can happen by chance or by the judgment and wisdom either of the laws or of a man of outstanding excellence.

We can't doubt that this is a matter of the greatest importance. If there's been no provision for dealing with this problem, the state won't be able to last by its own excellence, but only by good luck. On the other hand, when a suitable remedy for this evil has been adopted, not
 20 only will it not fall by its own defect, it will fall only by some inevitable fate. We'll soon make this quite clear.

The first remedy people thought of for this evil was that every few years they would appoint, for a few months,⁴ a supreme Dictator who

1. Neither the OP nor the NS gives this chapter a title. I have supplied this title from the first paragraph.

2. Spinoza applied the same epithet, *acutissimus*, to Machiavelli in v, 7.

3. Machiavelli presents this as the proverbial wisdom of doctors, but apparently his editors have not yet been able to find a source for the maxim. Cf. Machiavelli, *Discourses* 209.

4. OP, Gebhardt, Wernham: *in mensem unum aut duos*, for a month or two. NS: *voor een maant, voor een jaar, of voor twee jaren*, for a month, or a year, or two years. Wernham conjectured that the Dutch translator had misread *unum* as *annum*. This seems possible, but makes the time a bit shorter than it normally was in the Roman Republic, where the dictator's term of office was typically set at six months. (It was customary for the dictator to lay down his powers before the end of that period, if the situation did not require him to hold them that long. See "dictator" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, May 2014.) Van Hove (1661, II, vi, 2) gives six months as the normal maximum time. PR propose: *in unum annum*, for a year. But their reasoning (pp. 307–8) seems unconvincing. Machiavelli argued (*Discourses* I, xxxiv–xxxv) that the dictatorship was a beneficial institution, provided its authority was not granted for a long time, by which he meant a year or two. He was no doubt mindful of the case of Caesar, who at the

would have the authority to investigate, judge, and decide on any punishments for the deeds of Senators and public officials, thereby restoring
 25 the state to its founding principle. But those who are anxious to avoid the disadvantages of sovereignty ought to adopt remedies which agree with the nature of the state and can be deduced from its foundations. Otherwise, in their effort to escape Charybdis, they fall into Scylla.

It's true that everyone—the rulers as well as the ruled—must be
 30 kept in bounds by the fear of punishment or loss, so that they're not allowed to sin with impunity, or even with profit. On the other hand, it's also certain that if this fear is common to both good men and bad, the state will be in the greatest danger. So since Dictatorial 'power is
 [III/354] absolute, it can't be anything but terrifying to everyone, especially if (as is required) the Dictator is appointed at a fixed time. Then everyone eager to be esteemed would seek this honor most zealously. Certainly since excellence is not valued as highly in peace as wealth is, the grander
 5 a man is, the more easily he'll achieve honors.

Perhaps this is why the Romans didn't usually appoint a Dictator at a designated time, but only when some chance need forced them to. Even so, as Cicero says, "talk of a Dictator was unpleasant to good men."⁵ Truly, since this Dictatorial 'power is absolutely Royal, the state
 10 can't be changed for a time into a Monarchy without great danger to the Republic, however short the time is. Moreover, if no definite time has been designated for appointing a Dictator, there would be no reason to take account of the time between one Dictator and another. But we said this ought to be preserved most carefully.

15 Because the matter is also quite ill-defined, it may easily be neglected. So, unless this Dictatorial 'power is permanent and stable—in which case it can't be entrusted to one man without changing the form of the state—it will be very uncertain. As a result, the well-being and preservation of the Republic will also be uncertain.

2. On the other hand, (by vi, 3) we can't doubt that if it's possible
 20 to make the sword of the Dictator perpetual, and a terror only to bad men, and at the same time to preserve the state's form, then the [state's] defects could never become so great that they can't be removed or

time of his assassination had been appointed dictator for life, a previous one-year term of having been extended indefinitely. This was highly unusual, and one reason Caesar was thought to be turning the republic into a monarchy.

5. *Letters to Quintus* III, viii, 4. OP, Gebhardt, read the quote from Cicero: *tumor dictatoris . . . bonis injucundus fuit*, a reading supported by the NS: *opgeblazenheit*, swollen state. V-L, noting that the passage in Cicero reads *rumor*, instead of *tumor*, emended. Subsequent editors have been divided: Wernham, Proietti, and Cristofolini accept the emendation. Droetto, Dominguez, and Shirley retain the OP text. I find the case for emending most persuasive.

corrected. To achieve all these conditions, we've said that the Council of Syndics ought to be subordinated to the supreme Council, so that
 25 dictatorial sword would be perpetual, not in the hands of some natural person, but in the hands of a civil person, whose members are so numerous that they can't divide the state among themselves (by viii, 1 and 2) or agree in any crime.

In addition, [the Syndics] are prohibited from assuming other offices of the state, they don't pay the armed forces, and they're of an age
 30 when they prefer things present and safe to things new and dangerous. So there's no danger to the state from them. They can't be a terror to good men, but only to bad men. And they will be. The less power they have to commit crimes, the more they'll have to restrain wickedness. Not only can they oppose the beginnings [of a threat] (because the
 [III/355] Council is permanent), they're also numerous enough that they'll dare to accuse and condemn this or that powerful man without fear of [his] ill will, especially since the votes are cast secretly, and the sentence is pronounced in the name of the whole Council.

3. But [it may be objected] in Rome the Tribunes of the plebeians
 5 were permanent, yet they couldn't suppress the power of a Scipio.⁶ Moreover, they had to refer what they judged to be salutary to the Senate for decision. Often the Senate frustrated them, so that the plebeians favored more the [Tribune] the Senators feared less. In addition, the authority of the Tribunes against the Patricians was defended by
 10 the support of the plebeians. Whenever they called upon the plebeians, they seemed to promote sedition rather than convene a Council. These disadvantages have no place in the state we've described in the preceding two Chapters.

4. However, the authority of the Syndics can only see that the form
 15 of the state is preserved. So it can prevent people from breaking the laws, and from being allowed to sin profitably. It can't see to it that vices the law can't prevent won't flare up, like those men fall into when they have too much leisure. These vices often lead to the ruin of the
 20 state. In peace, when fear has been set aside, men gradually change from being savage and warlike to being political *or* civilized, and from being civilized, they become soft and lazy. One tries to surpass another, not in excellence, but in arrogance and extravagant living. As a result, they

6. On the role of the tribunes in the Roman Republic, see Machiavelli's *Discourses* I, iii, and III, i; and Van Hove 1661, II, vi, 2 (Wernham). It's not clear that the reference to Scipio is pertinent. It's true that Scipio successfully defended himself and his brother against the tribunes' charges that they had misappropriated funds. But this did not involve the office of dictator, which Scipio declined after his triumph in Africa.

begin to treat their native customs with disdain, and take on foreign fashions—that is, they begin to become slaves.

5 To avoid these evils many have tried to pass sumptuary laws,
 25 but in vain. For all laws which can be violated without wronging anyone else are objects of derision. Far from reining in men's desires and lusts, they make them stronger. We always strive to have what is prohibited, and desire what we're denied. And even idle men are clever enough to get around laws concerning things which can't be
 30 absolutely prohibited, such as banquets, games, adornments, and other things of that kind, which are only evil in the excess. What is excessive must be judged by each person's wealth; so it can't be determined by any universal law.

6. I conclude, then, that those common vices of peace which we're speaking about here should never be prohibited directly, but only indirectly, by laying down foundations of the state which will result, not in
 [III/356] most people being eager to live wisely—that's impossible—but in their being guided by affects more advantageous to the Republic. So what's most desirable is that the rich, if they aren't thrifty, should still be
 5 greedy. There's no doubt that if this affect of greed, which is universal and constant, is fostered by an eagerness to be esteemed, most people will put their greatest zeal into increasing their possessions without disgrace. That way they achieve honors and avoid the greatest shame.

7. If we pay close attention, then, to the foundations of the kinds of
 10 Aristocratic state I've explained in the two preceding Chapters, we'll see that this result follows from them. For in each state the number of regents is so great that most of the rich have access to rule and to achieving the honors of the state. But if it's established in addition (as we said in viii, 47) that Patricians who've borrowed more than they can
 15 pay will be expelled from the Patrician order, whereas those who've lost their possessions by misfortune will be restored to their place, there's no doubt that everyone will try as hard as possible to preserve their possessions. Moreover, they'll never desire foreign dress, or scorn that of their native land, if the law establishes that the Patricians, and those
 20 who seek offices, are distinguished by special clothing. (On this see viii, 25 and 47.) Besides these [devices], in each state we can think of others which are agreeable to the nature of the place and the mentality of the people, and take special care that the subjects do their duty voluntarily rather than because the law compels them to.

8. For a state which provides only fear as the motive for men's actions
 25 will lack vices rather than possess virtue. Men must be so led that they seem to themselves not to be led, but to live according to their own mentality and from their free decision, so that they're restrained only

by love of freedom, the desire to increase their possessions, and the hope of achieving honors. Portraits, triumphs, and other incentives to
30 virtue are signs of bondage, not freedom. Rewards for virtue are decreed for slaves, not free men.

I concede, of course, that these incentives spur men on more than any others. But in the beginning they're decreed for great men; later, as envy increases, they're granted to ignoble men, puffed up by the size of their fortunes—to the immense indignation of all good men. Furthermore, those who boast of the triumphs and portraits of their
[III/357] parents believe they themselves are wronged if they're not preferred to others. Finally, not to mention other things, this is certain: once equality has been set aside, the common freedom necessarily perishes, and there's no way equality can be preserved once the public law awards special honors to some man famous for his excellence.

5 9. Now that we've established these points, let's see whether states of this kind can be destroyed by some inherent defect. Surely, if any state can be everlasting, it must be one whose laws, once properly established, remain inviolate. For the laws are the soul of the state. So if they are preserved, the state itself is necessarily preserved. But
10 laws can't be unshaken unless they're defended both by reason and by men's common affects; otherwise, if they rest only on the support of reason, they are of course weak and easily overcome. So since we've shown that the fundamental laws of each Aristocratic state agree both with reason and with the common affect of men, we can maintain that
15 if any state is everlasting, this one must be everlasting, or that it can't be destroyed by any inherent defect, but only by some inevitable fate.

10. But here's another objection someone might make: although the laws of the state presented here may be defended both by reason and by a common affect of men, they can still sometimes be overcome. For
20 there's no affect which isn't sometimes overcome by a stronger, contrary affect. We see that the fear of death is often vanquished by the desire for someone else's property. Those who flee an enemy, overawed by fear, can't be restrained by fear of anything else, but rush headlong into rivers or into a fire, to escape their enemies' steel. So, however properly a commonwealth may be organized, and however well its laws
25 may be set up, still, in the greatest crises of the state, when everyone is seized by panic, as often happens, then everyone approves only what the present fear urges, without giving any consideration to the future or to the laws. All heads turn toward a Man who is famous for his victories. They release him from the laws and (a very bad precedent) continue

30 his command, entrusting the whole Republic to his good faith. That's why the Roman state perished.⁷

To reply to this Objection I say, first, that in a properly constituted Republic a terror like that doesn't arise except from some just cause. So that terror, and the confusion stemming from it, can't be ascribed to any cause human prudence can avoid.

[III/358] Next, it must be noted that in a Republic such as we've described in the preceding chapters⁸ it can't happen (by viii, 9 and 25) that one man or another has such an outstanding reputation for excellence that all heads turn toward him. On the contrary, he must have several
5 rivals, whom many others support. So however much confusion may arise from terror in a Republic, still, no one will be able to cheat the laws and declare someone elected to military command contrary to law without an immediate dispute from those who want someone else. To settle this dispute it will eventually be necessary to go back to the things established previously, to laws everyone has approved, and to order the affairs of the state according to these laws.

10 I can assert unconditionally, then, that both a state which one city alone controls, and especially a state which several cities control, is everlasting, *or* can't be dissolved or changed into another form by any internal cause.

CHAPTER XI

[*On Democracy*]¹

1. I come, finally, to the third, and completely absolute state, which we
15 call Democratic.² We've said that the difference between this state and an Aristocratic one consists chiefly in this: that in an Aristocratic state it depends only on the will and free Choice of the supreme Council that this or that person is made a Patrician. So no one has a hereditary right to vote or stand for political offices, and no one can demand this
20 right for himself by law, as happens in the state we're now discussing. For [in a Democracy] everyone whose parents were citizens, or who was

7. It was also, Wernham notes, what happened during the panic of 1672, when William III was appointed stadtholder, in spite of the Perpetual Edict of 1667.

8. I.e., I take it, the two chapters on aristocracies, viii and ix.

1. Neither the OP nor the NS gives this chapter a title. The title supplied is suggested by the first paragraph.

2. See the Glossary entries ARISTOCRACY and DEMOCRACY.

born on the country's soil, or who has deserved well of the Republic, or who has the right to be a citizen for any other reasons on account of which the Law commands that someone be granted the right of a citizen—all such people, I say, rightly demand for themselves the right to vote in the supreme Council and to stand³ for political offices. They
 25 can be denied this only on account of a crime or disgrace.⁴

2. So suppose it's established by law that only Elders who've reached a certain age, or only firstborn sons (as soon as their age permits), or only those who contribute a certain sum of money to the Republic, can have the right to vote in the supreme Council, and to manage
 30 the business of the state. The result of such a law could be that the supreme Council is composed of fewer citizens than the Council of an Aristocratic state of the kinds we've discussed. Nevertheless, states of this kind ought to be called Democratic. For their citizens, who are destined to govern the Republic, are not chosen by the supreme
 [III/359] Council as the best, but are destined for this status by law.

States of this kind—where it's not the best who are destined to rule, but those who, perhaps by a lucky chance, are rich or eldest sons—may seem inferior to an Aristocratic state. But if we consider actual life, *or*
 5 the common condition of men, the result will be the same. For the men who seem best to the Patricians will always be the rich, or their own close relatives, or their friends. Of course, if Patricians were the kind of people who, in choosing colleagues, were free of every affect, and guided only by zeal for the public well-being, there would be no
 10 state to compare with an Aristocracy. But experience has shown abundantly that things don't work that way—especially in oligarchies, where the will of the Patricians is least bound by the law, because they lack rivals. For there the Patricians, in a partisan spirit, keep the best men off the Council, and seek comrades on it who will hang on their every
 15 word. In such a state things go much less fortunately [than they do in a Democracy], because the Selection of the Patricians depends on the absolute free will of certain men, *or* a will unconstrained by any law. But let's go back to where I started.

3. From what we said in xi, 2, it's evident that we can conceive different kinds of Democratic state. I don't plan to discuss each one, but
 20 only one in which absolutely everyone who is bound only by the laws of his native land, and who is, furthermore, his own master and lives honorably, has the right to vote in the supreme Council and to stand for political offices. I say, explicitly, *who is bound only by the laws of his*

3. OP, G: *subeunda*. Wernham, Cristofolini: *subeundi* (as in III/358/19).

4. Cf. vi, 11, 21; viii, 14.

25 *native land*,⁵ to exclude foreigners, who are counted as under someone else's control. I added, furthermore, that *apart from the fact that they are bound by the laws of the state, in other things they are their own masters*, to exclude women and servants, who are under the 'power of their husbands and masters, and also children and pupils, so long as they are under the 'power of their parents and tutors. Finally, I said, *and who*
 30 *live honorably*, to exclude especially those who are disgraced on account of a crime or some shameful kind of life.

4. But perhaps someone will ask whether women are under the 'power of their husbands by nature or by custom. If this has happened only by custom, then no reason compels us to exclude women from rule. But if we consult experience, we'll see that this occurs only because
 [III/360] of their weakness.

Wherever we find men and women [living together], they have never ruled together. What we see is that there the men rule and the women are ruled, and that in this way both sexes live in harmony. On
 5 the other hand, the Amazons, who according to tradition⁶ once ruled, did not allow men to remain on their soil, but raised only the females, and killed the males they bore.

If women were by nature equal to men, both in strength of character and in native intelligence—in which the greatest human power, and
 10 consequently right, consists—surely among so many and such diverse nations we would find some where each sex ruled equally, and others where men were ruled by women, and so educated that they could do less with their native intelligence. But since this has not happened anywhere, we can say without reservation that women do not, by nature,
 15 have a right equal to men's, but that they necessarily submit to men. So it cannot happen that each sex rules equally, much less that men are ruled by women.

Furthermore, if we consider human affects, namely, that for the most part men love women only from an affect of lust, and that they judge their native intelligence and wisdom greater the more beautiful

5. Wernham notes that the quote properly begins with *qui* (as in the NS), not *solis* (as in the OP and Gebhardt). Several translators agree (Droetto, Dominguez, Shirley, Bartuschat, and Proietti). There's a similar issue in the next quote.

6. Quintus Curtius (VI, v, 24–32) is one likely source for Spinoza's account of the Amazons, though the stories occur in many ancient authors (e.g., Herodotus, *Histories* IV, 110–17). Spinoza's language does not clearly commit him to a view about the historicity of the traditional stories. In DCv ix, 3, Hobbes had argued that in his day there were a number of matriarchal societies, in which men and women lived together, but the women, by natural right, had the supreme authority. Tacitus also reports this arrangement among the Sitones, though he disapproves of it (*Germania* 45). The most thorough attempt to separate fact from fiction is now probably Mayor 2014, which argues that the legends had a substantial basis in fact.

20 they are, and furthermore, that men find it intolerable that the women they love should favor others in some way, etc.,⁷ we'll have no difficulty seeing that men and women can't rule equally without great harm to the peace. But enough of these matters.

The rest is lacking.

7. Reminiscent of E III P35S.

Glossary–Index



PREFACE

Words have a definite meaning only from their use.

—Spinoza, TTP xii, 11

Once I heard a friend, a specialist in ancient philosophy, say: “I don’t care how a translator translates a term, so long as he always translates it the same way.” I take this as hyperbole, expressing a strong preference for consistency, which would often have to give way, in practice, to a more flexible policy. A good choice in one context may be very bad in another. So a conscientious translator, however strongly inclined toward consistency, will find it hard to be strictly consistent. But a modest version of my friend’s principle seems reasonable: a translator of philosophical treatises should generally try to translate the principal terms of the text as consistently as she can without being seriously misleading.

To see why consistency might be important, consider *praejudicium*, a term which occurs frequently in Spinoza’s works, as it does in those of Descartes, who once wrote that the *praejudicia* of childhood—the prejudices of childhood, as I would translate it—are the chief cause of error, and that the remedy for this is to try to set them all aside.¹ A popular translation of Spinoza, admirable in many ways, uses a wide variety of different English expressions to render *praejudicium*: sometimes simply “prejudice,” of course, but also “misconception,” or “preconception,” or “false assumption,” or “dogma,” or “bias,” or “biased dogma,” or “prejudgment,” or “unorthodoxy,” or “set of attitudes.” It’s hard to believe that each of these choices can be justified as capturing some particular nuance of *praejudicium* in the context in which it occurs. But even if they could, we would lose something important by this elegant variation. *Praejudicium* is a big issue for Spinoza, as it was for Descartes. If the translation obscures how frequently that term occurs, the reader may not realize just how big an issue it is. She also may not realize the extent to which Descartes and Spinoza share a common preoccupation.

That’s one reason for seeking as much consistency as possible in the treatment of key terms. Here’s another: it will be important, at some stage, not just to see that Spinoza is very worried about prejudice, but also to see what kinds of opinion he would include under that heading.

1. *Principles of Philosophy* I, 71, 75. Anyone who has access to the Past Masters database (InteLex version) can now easily see how often *praejudicium*, *préjugé*, and their variant forms occur in the Adam and Tannery edition of Descartes’ works and in the Gebhardt edition of Spinoza’s.

I suppose most of us would agree with the general proposition that prejudice—understood, let's say, as a belief too easily embraced, unsupported by the evidence, and perhaps even contrary to the evidence—is not a good thing. We may still differ about what beliefs are examples of prejudice. Many of us, prior to reading Spinoza, might not think all the beliefs he would call prejudices are unreasonable to believe. His list would include some very common opinions: that everything has some purpose, that God has created everything for some end, that he created man to worship God. These examples come from the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*. In the Preface to the TTP, Spinoza mentions a number of others: that the clergy deserve the highest honor, that religion consists in mysteries, and that in interpreting Scripture, we must assume it is everywhere true and divine. Only when we see what beliefs Spinoza considers to be prejudices can we appreciate the implications of his attack. And we will not easily see that if the translation obscures the range of things he thinks come under that heading.

So there's good reason to translate the central terms of a philosopher's work as consistently as you can. That's why I originally began this Glossary-Index. I wanted to be as consistent as I could in my treatment of key terms. Since I did not always remember the choices I had made, I needed to keep track of them. Early on, realizing how frequently I found it necessary to depart from a one-to-one correspondence,² I decided that it would be good to share this information with my readers. I was already indexing the terms as they occurred in the Latin text, and recording the English terms I used to translate them. If I made this information available to my reader, that might help her see how Spinoza uses his language, bringing together the different passages in which he uses a given Latin term, and making the connection between those passages transparent when a variety of translations would otherwise obscure the connection. It seemed to me that if I explained in the Index how the terms in Spinoza's text are correlated with the terms in my translation—and in addition used the Glossary to comment on translation issues and Spinoza's usage—this might reduce some of the problems inherent in translation. Making this information available might also help the reader find alternatives in cases where she feels that I did not make the best choice. In some cases, it might even be helpful to think of the options not chosen as in a way present, even if

2. For cases where I would claim that it's quite necessary to use different English terms for the same Latin term, see the entries below on EVIL and RIGHT. Perhaps the most interesting cases where it seems to me essential to maintain virtually absolute consistency concern the terms *multitudo*, *vulgus*, *plebs*, and *populus*, discussed below under MULTITUDE, COMMON PEOPLE, ORDINARY PEOPLE, PEOPLE. On this see Balibar 1985b/1989.

PREFACE

not made explicit in a particular passage.³ Here are the principles I've followed in constructing my index:

- 1) I've tried to record the most philosophically interesting uses of the most important terms in Spinoza's philosophical vocabulary. If a term occurs very frequently, I take that as *prima facie* evidence that it is important, though I may be selective in the occurrences I record. For example, the term *pars*, normally translated "part," occurs quite frequently, and in some uses has considerable importance for Spinoza's philosophy. Letter 32 illustrates this abundantly. Other uses are of no philosophical interest. For example, in TTP xii, 39, Spinoza uses the phrase *maxima hominum pars* to express the idea that most men would not do something. So I include the former instances, but not the latter. Generally I do not index terms which occur rarely, preferring to use a footnote to explain their meaning, if that seems necessary. But if a term is important enough, I may index it, even if it occurs infrequently. Sometimes the fact that an important term occurs infrequently is interesting in itself. (*Conatus* would be an example.)
- 2) Normally I group etymologically related terms together, except when I think this will produce too cumbersome an entry. This has the advantage, often, of bringing together terms whose close relationship is obvious in the language of the text, but not in the language of the translation. Index entries generally begin with a noun, followed by related verbs, adjectives, and so forth. But where a verb or adjective occurs much more frequently than any noun related to it, the entry may begin with the verb or adjective.
- 3) Phrases involving two or more words—e.g., *aeterna veritas*—are generally indexed as subentries under the noun in the phrase (or the more important noun, in a phrase which contains two nouns). But I have tried to avoid multiplying subentries, and do not include the Dutch translations of these phrases.
- 4) The primary initial purpose of the Glossary was to enable readers to go from the English of the translation to the Latin of the index. Sometimes the English term is so similar to the Latin it translates that someone looking in the index for a word very like the English term would quickly find the right term. So looking for a word that looks like "absurd" would quickly lead to the right result. In those cases I create a Glossary entry for the English term only if I have something to say about Spinoza's use of the corresponding Latin term. But often the relation between the English term and the Latin it translates is not obvious. To take a straightforward example, I use two English terms, "repeal" and "disregard," to translate the

3. Sometimes translators try to make the ambiguity of a term explicit by offering a double translation. For example, Glazemaker will sometimes translate *jura* by (the Dutch equivalent of) "laws and rights." This might be acceptable on a limited basis, but doing it systematically would produce a translation which was virtually unreadable.

GLOSSARY-INDEX

Latin *abrogare*, depending on whether the action of abrogation is taken by a legal authority or by a citizen subject to that authority. In neither case will looking for a word similar to the English words quickly lead you to the right Latin term.

- 5) References to specific passages of biblical books will be indexed under *Biblical and Talmudic References*. But references to entire books of the Bible appear in the Index of Proper Names.
- 6) I italicize occurrences of formal definitions, quasi-definitions (where Spinoza uses *sive* to indicate something like an equivalence), and passages where the word or phrase attracts attention in a note. Where Spinoza gives different definitions in different places, my policy is to make each definition an italicized entry.
- 7) I continue the policy adopted in Volume I of recording the terms used by Spinoza's seventeenth-century Dutch translators, taking the terms used in the TP and Correspondence from the NS, wherever possible, and those used in the TTP from *De Rechtzinnige Theologant*. I do think it's useful to see how Spinoza's contemporary Dutch translators dealt with his Latin, particularly when they found it necessary to use a variety of different words. But I do not claim to have recorded all the terms they used.
- 8) Since I'm placing the *Annotations* to the TTP on the Gebhardt page which the annotation annotates, I index the terms which occur in those notes as if the term in question occurred on the page annotated.

There are certain important words of frequent occurrence which require some explanation, but which I haven't attempted to index, or create a glossary entry for. The prime example is *sive* (or *seu*), which I standardly translate by an italicized "or." Sometimes, at least, Spinoza uses this connective to indicate a kind of equivalence, or (as I put it above) "something like" an equivalence, between the terms or phrases *sive* links. Put thus generally and vaguely, I suppose this is a proposition most commentators on Spinoza would accept.⁴ But as I noted briefly in Volume I (p. xv) we can't always take *sive* to indicate a simple equivalence. Here I'll attempt to say something more about Spinoza's use of this important term.

- (i) Sometimes Spinoza's use of *sive* does mark an unproblematic equivalence. For example, at III/177/4-5, Spinoza writes that

no doctrines pertain to the catholic *or* universal faith which can be controversial among honest men.

4. See, for example, Piet Steenbakkers' entry on this term in *The Continuum Companion to Spinoza* 2011.

PREFACE

Here “universal” (*universalis*) is just what “catholic” (*catholica*) means in this context. A decent dictionary would tell us that “universal” is a candidate translation; considerations of context would quickly narrow the field to this meaning.

- (ii) Sometimes what we have is arguably an equivalence in which the second disjunct provides an alternate phrasing which offers what we might now call “an analysis” or theoretical definition of the term with which it’s linked, language which is supposed to give us a deeper understanding of what the first disjunct means (or at least, what it means in Spinoza’s philosophy). This seems to me the right way to view the use of *sive* in Definition 5 of Part I of the *Ethics*:

By mode I understand the affections of a substance, *or* that which is in another, through which it is also conceived.

How helpful this explanation actually is will depend, of course, on how well we understand what it is for one thing to “exist in” another or “be conceived through” another. But I think this usage of *sive* occurs quite frequently in Spinoza. (E I D1 might provide another example.)

- (iii) Sometimes *sive* introduces an alternate way of putting things which does not involve an equivalence, but is arguably more precise than the initial way, as in:

subjects are . . . under the control of the Commonwealth, insofar as they fear its power *or* threats. (III/287/12–14)

or

both a state which one city alone controls, and especially a state which several cities control, is everlasting (*aeternum*), *or* can’t be dissolved or changed into another form by any internal cause. (III/358/10–12)

This is one standard Latin usage. Cf. the OLD 9b.

- (iv) Sometimes we have what is clearly neither an equivalence nor a clearer or more precise way of putting things:

This alliance remains firmly established so long as the reason for making the alliance—the fear of loss *or* hope of profit—continues to motivate both parties. (III/290/11)

or

if every descendant of the King were permitted to marry *or* to have children. (III/316/3–4)

We need to be aware of this possibility, if we’re not to take the mere use of *sive* to entail more than it actually does.

- (v) And sometimes, *though Spinoza may even say explicitly that one thing is the same thing as another*, we should probably regard this as a persuasive

definition, that is, an attempt, by stipulation, to get us to regard as equivalent two things whose identity is not obvious. Here's an example which occurs in TTP xiv:

The teaching of the Gospel . . . contains nothing but simple faith: to trust in God, and to revere him, *or* (what is the same thing), to obey him. (xiv, 8)

Other examples which might fall in this category—though in these cases there is no explicit affirmation of the identity of the two things—include the reference to the “natural power, *or* Right, of men” (III/277/15) and the reference to “the King’s sword, *or* right” (III/319/6). In each of these cases the purpose of the identification seems to be to clothe the first disjunct with the aura of the second.

This has an interest which goes beyond the particular cases so far mentioned. The most important examples of the use of *sive*, from the standpoint of understanding Spinoza’s philosophy, occur in the Preface to Part IV of the *Ethics*, where he twice uses the famous phrase *Deus seu natura* (II/ 206/23, 26–27). Nowhere else in his works does Spinoza use this language. What does he mean by it? I don’t think we know, at this stage of our studies. But to decide what it *might* mean we need to examine, with some care, Spinoza’s many uses of *sive*. I hope that this edition will advance a discussion which needs to take place by organizing some of the necessary data.

Another problematic word of frequent occurrence is *quatenus*. In company with other translators I normally translate *quatenus* by “insofar as.” But lately I have come to think that this may be misleading. *Quatenus* is ambiguous. Of the various possible meanings recognized in the OLD the two which seem most relevant are: (1) “to the extent to which” indicating scope (and implying that there is some limit to the scope); and (2) “inasmuch as” or “seeing that,” implying causal force. (Cf. OLD B7 and B8.) I believe Spinoza scholars tend to assume *quatenus* has the first meaning. I have thought this myself, though without, it now seems to me, carefully thinking out the implications of this interpretation. But I now think there are contexts where that interpretation is impossible, and the second is clearly indicated: e.g., III/58/9. (Surely it is not the case that man is *only to some extent* a part of nature.) I have not tried to resolve this ambiguity in my translation, partly because of the difficulty of deciding, in many cases, which interpretation is best, and partly because I suspect that the English “insofar as” may have the same ambiguity. See the discussion of this term in the *Continuum Companion* 2011.

In Volume II, my resource of first resort in investigating the possible meanings of Latin terms has generally been the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

But as helpful as that work is, I have found myself frequently consulting the Brepolis *Database of Latin Dictionaries*, which includes not only Lewis and Short's *Latin Dictionary* (still quite useful) and Forcellini's *Lexicon*, but also a number of dictionaries recording later Latin usage, like DuCange's *Glossarium* and Chauvin's *Lexicon philosophicum*. For Dutch the dictionary I have gone to first is Jansonius's *Nieuw Groot Nederlands-Engels Woordenboek* (2nd ed., 3 vols., 1972). Where Jansonius did not help, I consulted Van Dale's *Groot Woordenboek van de Nederlandse Taal* (14th ed., 3 vols., 2005).

Glossary

ABSOLUTE

Absolutus

Generally I use the English cognate for *absolutus*. But there were contexts in which an alternative seemed better: sometimes “unconditional” or “finished” (or for adverbial forms, “without qualification,” “without reservation,” “without exception,” etc.) seemed to me to convey more clearly the sense *absolutus* had in the context.

In political contexts, however, *absolutus* has a theoretical importance I don't think it has elsewhere. There I felt it necessary to stick consistently to “absolute.” Spinoza's usage is influenced by Hobbes, who had a regress argument designed to show that any government must provide for someone (some individual human being or group of human beings) to be the final decision maker, and thus to have *absolute* power, i.e., a power not at risk of being overridden by any other human will. Cf. Hobbes DCv, vi, 18, and Grotius 1625/1683, I, iii, 7. Hampton 1986, 98–105, has a useful discussion of Hobbes' argument.

ACCOMMODATE

Accommodare

Frequently the TTP uses this verb to indicate that the way scriptural revelation

is expressed reflects the limited understanding either of the prophets themselves or of their audience. But he makes an exception to this generalization for Jesus. Cf. i, 41; iv, 17, 29–31.

ACTION, ACT

Actio, actus, factum

Actio is used most frequently to refer to human actions, but also sometimes to the actions of God and of nature. In this volume I have not found it used in the special sense it has in the *Ethics* (E III D3). At TTP vi, 43, God's action is identified with the refraction and reflection of the sun's rays which produces the rainbow.

Actus occurs only infrequently in Volume II, and then without any apparent distinction between it and *actio*, never to refer to the actualization of a potentiality. *Factum* occurs occasionally in the sense of “action,” e.g., at TTP xx, 21.

ADVANTAGE

Commodum

AFFECT

Affectus

Affectus is a technical term in Spinoza's philosophical psychology, which translators have often rendered by “emotion.” I don't find that broad enough to

GLOSSARY-INDEX

cover the various states Spinoza includes under that heading. He counts as affects desire and dispositions or character traits (such as nobility and tenacity). We must also remember that an affect is not just a psychological item. E III D3 defines an affect as an affection of the body, by which its power of acting is increased or diminished, and at the same time the ideas of these affections. We should not equate affects with passions (though Spinoza himself is not always careful about that distinction). When we ourselves are an adequate cause of the affect, it is an action in the technical sense of E III D2.

AFFIRMATION, APPROVAL

Approbatio

AGE, CENTURY, GENERATION

Saeculum

Saeculum is ambiguous among the various terms I've used to translate it. Often it is difficult to be sure how long a period of time Spinoza had in mind. In my English usage a generation is only about a quarter of a century, whereas an age might last for several centuries. In biblical studies a generation is sometimes taken to be a period of forty years. Sometimes it may not matter which English term we use. When it does matter, I've tried to be conservative in my translation, so as not to make Spinoza seem to overstate his case. In TTP viii, 17 and 20, Spinoza says that the author of the Pentateuch lived many *saecula* after Moses. We might translate *saecula* by "century" here. Spinoza does believe, and will subsequently argue, that the author of the Pentateuch is also the "author" (i.e., person primarily responsible for the final version) of the historical sequence from Joshua through 2 Kings, and so must have lived no earlier than the post-exilic period, several hundred years after the time when we suppose Moses to have lived. But in TTP viii, 17 and 20, Spinoza has not argued that yet, and what he has argued at that point supports only the weaker conclusion. So I

attribute to him only the weaker claim: many generations.

AGREE, AGREEMENT

Convenire, consensus

Convenire is the verb Spinoza uses in the TP to describe the act of two (or more) people who make an agreement to unite their forces (ii, 13). The act of agreement in itself creates no rights, except insofar as it expresses a shared intention to work together, which, to the extent that it is stable, increases the power of the parties. It is the increased power which, on Spinoza's theory, gives rise to the rights they jointly have to protect themselves and, in general, to pursue their common interests (ii, 15). *Consensus* is the noun he uses in that context to refer to the agreement they make (ii, 16–17).

But in a number of passages "consent" seemed the more apt translation for *consensus*: e.g., TTP iv, 36, where *consensus* is required for the faith which justifies in Paul; or in TTP v, 8, where the subject is Jesus' condemnation of our inclinations to violate the moral law in Matthew 5:28; in TTP v, 25, where it's the consent of the citizens in a democracy to their laws; and in TTP viii, 23, where it's the consent of the people of Israel to the covenant at Mount Sinai.

ALLIANCE, ALLY

Foedus, confederatus

ANGER

Ira

A PRIORI/A POSTERIORI

A priori/a posteriori

Since the time of Leibniz the most common use of these Latin terms has been to mark a distinction between truths which can be known independently of experience (Leibniz's "truths of reason") and truths knowable only by appeal to experience (Leibniz's "truths of fact"). But there is an older usage, deriving ultimately from Aristotle, and common in scholastic philosophy,

GLOSSARY

according to which knowing something *a priori* means knowing it by its cause, and knowing it *a posteriori* means knowing it from its effects. On the various forms this distinction can take, see Hamlyn 2006.

In the seventeenth century it is sometimes a difficult question which (if any) of these two senses is in play. Commentators on Descartes have found his use of these terms in the Second Replies (AT VII, 155–56) difficult to reconcile with either usage. Cf. Descartes 1963, II, 582n, with Descartes 1985, II, 110n. In the Spinozistic texts where these terms occur in Volume I (I/159/18–28, 250/3–6; II/54/2–5), it seems clear that Spinoza is using these terms in the Aristotelian/scholastic sense. Arguably that is also the sense in which Tschirnhaus and Spinoza use the term *a priori* in their correspondence. See Letters 59, 80, 82, and 83, and cf. AHW, 496.

ARISTOCRACY

Aristocratia

In the TTP and early in the TP, Spinoza's use of this term seemed normal: an aristocracy is government by the few (who presumably become members of the ruling class by heredity). But in TP viii, 1, and TP xi, 1, Spinoza defines an aristocracy as a form of government in which the sovereign is a council made up of people chosen for that role, where the selection is done by the existing "aristocrats," where in principle the whole people might be chosen as members of the governing council, and where no one has membership in the council as a matter of right, hereditary or otherwise. See also DEMOCRACY.

It should be understood that membership in the "aristocracy" in itself does *not* imply any kind of superiority. In TP viii, 2, Spinoza seems to think that few of those honored as aristocrats will possess genuine excellence. The "outstanding men" referred to there are not to be identified with those socially recognized as aristocrats.

ARMY, MILITARY

Militia

I have used both "army" and "military" for *militia*, but I take "military" to be a broader term, covering both land forces and naval forces. I suspect that the broader term is often more appropriate, given the importance of naval forces in the Dutch wars in Spinoza's lifetime.

ART

Ars

Ars is much broader in its meanings than the English term derived from it, and occurs in a variety of senses, some positive, some negative, without its always being clear which is the best choice in the context. In addition to "art" I have used "skill," "ingenuity," "device," and "cunning."

In a context like TTP xx, 34, *artes* probably needs to be taken as ranging over fields of study not normally taken now as "arts," including the sciences. (One classical sense of *ars* is "a systematic body of knowledge and practical techniques, an art or science." See OLD 5a.) In TP i, 2, *artes* refers to the rules wise political leaders would follow.

Bonae artes, which I render "liberal studies," occurs in two key passages in TTP xx (§§27 and 45), without its being clear from the context what studies Spinoza is referring to. My translation assumes he is thinking of studies which would free the mind. So there *bonae artes* might refer to the study of philosophy, literature, and history, but also to disciplines like biblical scholarship, which Spinoza thinks of as being, in principle, a science.

ARTICULATENESS

Eloquentia

ATHEISM

Atheismus

As noted in the Editorial Preface to the TTP (p. 48), people accused Spinoza of atheism before he had ever published anything which might have justified that

accusation. Perhaps he had acquired that reputation because his excommunication was known to have been based partly on his having held that God “only exists philosophically.” (See Curley 2015a.) In any case, Spinoza’s desire not to be thought an atheist was one reason he wrote the TTP (Letter 30). But his rejection of traditional conceptions of God in that work only provided his critics with more grounds for their accusation.

His defense against the charge early in Letter 43—“atheists are accustomed to seek honors and riches immoderately. I’ve always scorned those things.” (IV/219b)—uses a common stereotype of atheists to escape the label. It’s understandable that Spinoza would wish to avoid being called an atheist, since that label had such negative connotations, but we might hope he could do better than that.

In my view his best defense would take the following line. He does affirm the existence of God (E I P11), conceived as an absolutely infinite being (E I D6), where an absolutely infinite being consists of infinite attributes, each of which expresses an eternal and infinite essence. He denies that this being possesses a will or an intellect or such affects as desire and love (E I P31). This doctrine underlies his rejection of the various anthropomorphisms mentioned in the Editorial Preface, p. 49.

The question, I think, is whether the advocates of organized religion are entitled to insist that anyone who does not accept their conception of God does not believe in God. Spinoza’s God does have a number of the properties traditional religions ascribe to God. It’s an immutable first cause of all things, active everywhere in the universe, uncaused by anything else. It’s also, Spinoza would argue, a being humans can love. He thinks the love of God is our greatest good. His God does not issue commands, or perform miracles, or reveal itself to man in the way the God of the

monotheistic religions is supposed to do. It is not the sort of God you can pray to for help in times of trouble. I can understand thinking that belief in so different a God makes for a very different kind of religion. But I also think the ethical importance Spinoza attached to this belief weighs heavily in favor of regarding his view as a genuine, if eccentric, form of religious belief. (Here his reply to Van Velthuysen is helpful. See IV/220/28–221/20.)

Some people prefer to call Spinoza, not an atheist, but a pantheist. It’s undeniable that Spinoza, in some sense, identifies God with Nature (E IV Pref). This is perhaps the most common reason for calling Spinoza a pantheist. (See, for example, Yandell 1998 or Mander 2012.) But in what sense does he identify God with Nature? Not, it seems, in the sense that he thinks the universe, the totality of (finite) things, is God. See the exchange with Van Velthuysen in Letters 42 and 43 (IV/208/28–35, 223/5–10). Moreover, E I P29S indicates that God is to be identified with *Natura naturans*, not with *Natura unqualified*. *Natura naturans* appears there to be the attributes of substance, a conclusion confirmed by KV I, viii. Whatever exactly the attributes are, they can hardly be identified with everything there is.

One possible ground for classing Spinoza as a pantheist would appeal, not to the *Deus sive Natura* language, but to his statement in Letter 6 (IV/36) that he does not separate God from nature as other philosophers do. Here we might observe that Spinoza’s God is *not really distinct* from Nature (understanding by “Nature” the totality of finite things). As Descartes defined this phrase, things really distinct from each other must each be capable of existing without the other (AT VII, 162). Spinoza maintains not only (what any traditional religious philosopher would say) that finite things cannot exist without God (E I P15), but also that God cannot exist without finite

things, since his production of them is a necessary consequence of his nature, not a matter of choice (E I P16).

This seems undeniably correct. But though this line of thinking calls attention to an important difference between Spinoza's philosophy and traditional religious philosophy, it also brings home the fact that even on the traditional view God and Nature are not really distinct. To satisfy the Cartesian requirements for real distinction it would have to be the case that *both* God and Nature are capable of existing apart from each other. And that's something traditional religious philosophy does not hold, since it maintains that Nature cannot exist without God.

AUTHOR, AUTHORITY

Author, auctoritas

In classical Latin, *author* can mean (as in English) the originator or source of something (often, but not always, of a writing), or the person primarily responsible for an action or situation, or someone who has the authority to make a decision, or a writer who is an acknowledged expert in a subject. The first of these senses seems to be the most common one in Spinoza, though the second and third also occur, if rarely. I have not found the fourth sense. But in spite of the ambiguity of *author*, it seems that in Spinoza the related noun *auctoritas* always occurs in the sense of "authority" and not "authorship." TTP vii, 52, is a clear case. See also vii, 88–94. It is difficult to be sure that this is universal, and TTP vii, 25, is one context where "authorship" is plausible.

Closely related to *author* are the terms *scriptor* and *scriba*, which I have translated "writer" and "scribe." *Scriba* occurs mainly in a stretch of text from III/135–45. It seems clear that in Spinoza's usage a *scriba* is normally a copyist, and not an author in any of the common English senses of that term. His usage of *scriptor* is not so clear. Sometimes he

seems to use *author* and *scriptor* interchangeably (e.g., in TTP vi, 59; vii, 15). Sometimes he makes a distinction between them: notably at TTP vii, 58. But it's not obvious what that distinction is. I hypothesize that when he does make this distinction, he intends *author* to refer to someone who is the original composer of the work, whereas *scriptor* is a more general term, which might refer to the original composer, but might also refer to someone who is a copyist or even an editor. In favor of this, perhaps, is the slide from *scriba* to *scriptor* in TTP ix, 44–45.

An important context is viii, 44, where Spinoza makes a distinction between the supreme power in a state and authority.

BEING

Ens

BELIEVE

Credere

TO BIND, BE BOUND

Obligare, teneri, adstringi

Spinoza uses a variety of verbs which seem to indicate that someone has been put under a moral obligation, difficult though this may seem to be to reconcile with his moral philosophy. Passages where this seems to be true include TTP v, 15; xvi, 18, 24; and TP iv, 4–5. This last passage is particularly rich and interesting.

In some cases what binds is said to be *jus naturale*. This is puzzling for the reasons explained in the entry on LAW, RIGHT. We might try to avoid the awkwardness by taking a statement like "I'm bound (*teneri*) by *jus naturale* to choose the lesser of two evils" to mean, not that I'm *obliged* to make that choice, but simply that I *can't* do otherwise. I'm not confident that this will work. Interesting is TTP xvi, 27, where what we are bound to do is something both compelled by necessity and urged by reason. In some cases what is said to bind is a passion, like hope or fear. See TTP xvi, 23.

GLOSSARY-INDEX

BLESSEDNESS

Beatitudo

BODY, CORPOREAL, CORPOREALITY

Corpus

BONDAGE, SLAVERY

Servitus

CAPACITY

Capacitas

CARE, CONCERN, RESPONSIBILITY

Cura

Cura frequently occurs in contexts involving divine providence, such as TTP ii, 48; v, 38; vi, 37; vii, 27. But it has a wide range of uses, and seems to be properly translated “responsibility” in contexts like TP ii, 17, or viii, 16.

CASE

Casus

CATHOLIC, UNIVERSAL

Catholicus

In classical Latin *catholicus* (a Latinization of the Greek *katholike*) means “universal.” But as Christianity began to establish itself in the ancient world, its dominant branch claimed the title “universal” for itself, even though its universality was compromised by other branches. Normally when Spinoza uses *catholicus* he means “universal,” and that is my default translation of the term. Sometimes (mainly in the correspondence with Burgh and Steno) the term really does refer to the Catholic Church or its members. Cf. the Pléiade 1453–54.

CAUSE, REASON, EXPLANATION

Causa

The use of the Latin *causa* is much broader than is the use of its English cognate. So Spinoza and his correspondents frequently use it in contexts in which “reason” or “explanation” is a more natural translation. It also occurs quite frequently in the sense of a case or cause one might defend or fight for. I don’t index those (quite frequent) uses of *causa* which occur in what the OLD

defines as “special ablatival senses,” such as *lucris causa* or *hac de causa*, where the term “cause” tends not to turn up in the translation.

CERTAIN

Certus

Certus is a problem. It is very natural to translate it by “certain,” which has the advantage that its many meanings tend to overlap those of its Latin cognate. But the ambiguity of “certain” has its downside. Which of the many possible senses is being used in the context? I have tried to restrict the use of “certain” to contexts where I thought the sense was “indubitable” or “indisputable” or “reliably to be expected,” or when I thought *certus* was being used “to particularize, but not further identify or describe.”

So the people who “immoderately desire *incerta* things” (TTP Pref., 4) are people who unreasonably desire things which are not reliably to be expected. See also TTP Pref., 23 or i, 1, uses of *certus* where it signifies indubitability. TTP Pref., 22 and 26 illustrate nicely the particularizing sense of *certus*. Since particularizing uses tend not to be interesting, they are generally not indexed.

Often, though, I have felt that “definite” or “fixed” best conveyed the meaning in the context. This is frequently true, for instance, in Letter 32. But the choice between “definite” and “fixed” is not always easy. In contexts where we have *certa* conjoined with *determinata*, I prefer “fixed” for *certa*, because I think Spinoza is usually speaking about a relationship which is constant over time (e.g., III/57/25; IV/172/18).

CERTAINTY (MATHEMATICAL, MORAL)

Certitudo (*mathematica, moralis*)

Spinoza defines mathematical certainty in TTP ii, 12. I take the definition there to mean that we possess mathematical certainty when the nature of the object we perceive makes it necessary for us to perceive the object in the way we do. This is the highest and most justified

GLOSSARY

degree of confidence, such as we might have in the axioms of a mathematical system. Spinoza does not use the phrase *certitudo metaphysica*, but seems to mean by *certitudo mathematica* essentially what Descartes meant by metaphysical certainty (see his *Principles of Philosophy* IV, 206): a certainty which involves not only an absence of doubt, and not only the psychological inability to doubt, but the complete irrationality of doubt.

Spinoza does not define moral certainty, but clearly it involves an absence of mathematical certainty and a weaker justification. I believe he uses this phrase consistently with Cartesian usage (cf. *Principles* IV, 205): the person's grounds for confidence will be sufficient to justify action, even in cases where there would be a significant cost in acting on a false belief. They do not exclude the possibility of error or doubt.

Important contexts are ADN. VIII (at III/111/12) and (though the terms "mathematical certainty" and "moral certainty" do not explicitly occur there) TTP xv, 36–37.

CHALDEAN *Chaldaeus*

Spinoza uses the term "Chaldean" to refer to the language we now call Aramaic. See, for example, TTP viii, 25–26, where he uses this term to refer to an Aramaic translation (or paraphrase) of the Pentateuch, and x, 19, where he uses it to refer to those portions of Daniel which were written in Aramaic. See also SYRIAC and HEBREW.

CHANCE *Casus*

When *casus* means "chance," it often occurs in the ablative, *casu*, by chance. In this usage it is contrasted with what happens *data opera*, intentionally, as is explicit at III/137/5. Spinoza does not think his assertion that some things happen by chance implies an abandonment of his view that everything has a cause.

CHANGE *Mutatio*

CHOICE; CHOOSE *Electio*

CHURCH *Ecclesia*

I take *ecclesia* to refer both to the building and to the institution. Spinoza does not restrict its use to Christian churches, but uses it also to speak of Judaism (e.g., at TTP xix, 55). ALM point out that this is a characteristic Calvinist usage, intended to emphasize the continuity between the Jewish people and Christian people.

CIRCUMSTANCE *Circumstantia, casus, conditio*

CITIZEN, CIVIL *Civis, civilis*

The translation of *civis* by "citizen" should be unproblematic. I take *civilis* (as applied to individuals) to mean "apt for life in a political society." See e.g., TP x, 4, where *civilis* is translated "political," and equated with being "civilized." *Civilis* also occurs as modifying *jus* and *vita*.

CITY *Civitas, urbs*

Civitas is ambiguous, frequently requiring translation by "city" (particularly in biblical discussions in the TTP), but more commonly (in the TP and the political portions of the TTP) by "state" or "commonwealth." For a discussion of the latter translations, see the entries on COMMONWEALTH and STATE. Rarely did it seem necessary to render *civitas* by "citizenship," though there are cases (TP viii, 42, and ix, 2). *Urbs* is unproblematic. It is always translated "city."

CLAIM *Vendicare*

Vendicare occurs several times in the OP text of the TP, meaning "to claim," typically with the dative of the reflexive pronoun, *sibi*, or with *ut suum*. It is

GLOSSARY-INDEX

easily confused with *vindicare*, meaning “to enforce” (with an object like *jus*, or *leges*, or *regulas*, or *contractus*), or to revenge oneself or defend oneself (with *sese*), or avenge (with an object like *damnum* or *injurias*). Gebhardt did not know the distinction between the two terms. *Vindicare* occurs in the neo-Latin of the Renaissance, but not in classical Latin. So he systematically changed *vindicare* to *vindicare* whenever he encountered it in the OP text. Akkerman began the process of sorting these things out (in Akkerman 1980, 85), though he did not give an exhaustive enumeration of the passages where we need to read *vindicare* rather than *vindicare*, and there are some mistakes in his references (corrected in Proietti 1995, 24–25). In six cases the OP’s *vindicare* should be retained and Gebhardt’s emendation rejected: III/284/11, 315/26, 315/31, 326/3, 326/9, 326/13. In one the OP’s *vindicare* should be emended to *vindicare*: III/281/25.

CLAN

Familia

In the TTP it seemed generally unproblematic to render *familia* by its English cognate, “family.” (An exception: TTP iii, 48, which seemed to require “house of Israel.”) But the term didn’t bear much theoretical weight there. In the TP it does. And in the TP “family” will generally not do as a translation of *familia*, because this would suggest a much smaller group than Spinoza seems to be thinking of. There’s nothing in Spinoza’s introduction of the term in TP vi, 11, which suggests that members of the same *familia* are biologically related. Ramond has a useful discussion of this term in the TP, Proietti/Ramond, 289n18, though he arrives at a different decision than I do. Wernham used “tribe” for *familia* in the TP, which seems an acceptable alternative way of addressing the difficulty.

CLARITY, CLEAR, CLEARLY

Perspicuitas, clarus, evidentiter

COMMAND

Jussus, mandatum, praeceptum

Generally it seems unproblematic to translate these terms by “command,” but in two passages in the TTP (iv, 26 and 38–39), it seems that it would be incorrect to so render *praeceptum*, Spinoza’s point being that divine imperatives cannot be properly regarded as commands.

COMMON PEOPLE

Vulgus

Spinoza does not have much good to say about the *vulgus*. They are generally wretched, not satisfied for long, eager for novelties to wonder at, inconstant, and easily manipulated by their rulers. Hostile to science, they are willfully ignorant of natural causes, inclined to anthropomorphic conceptions of God, and to belief in miracles. It is impossible to save them from fear and superstition (TTP Pref., 8, 15, 33; vi, 3–5).

As a result, there are certain things the common people will not easily understand, and teachers will have to accommodate their teachings to the limits of their understanding (TTP v, 35–40). Sometimes accommodating a doctrine to the understanding of the common people means teaching something false (e.g., that God is like a man); but sometimes it means trying to prove a true proposition by appeal to experience rather than demonstrative argument. When Spinoza says that the *ingenium* of the *vulgus* is not capable of perceiving things clearly and distinctly, he exaggerates even on his own principles, since the doctrine of the *Ethics* is that everyone has some adequate, or clear and distinct, ideas.

In general, Spinoza’s use of *vulgus* seems hard to reconcile with his support for democracy. But TP vii, 27, where Spinoza argues that the weaknesses of the *vulgus* are defects common to humans in general, and in political contexts to be excused by the ignorance in which their leaders keep them, may mark a change

GLOSSARY

in attitude. *Vulgus* occurs frequently in the TTP, infrequently in the TP.

COMMONWEALTH

Civitas

Sometimes Spinoza uses *civitas* in the sense of “city” (see CITY). But in the TTP at least, he more often uses it as one of a number of terms which might be translated “state.” TTP xvi, 43–45 seems to illustrate this usage clearly. I had some temptation (following Hobbes in *Leviathan*) to translate *civitas* by “commonwealth,” to indicate that there is at least a verbal difference between *civitas* and the other terms which might be translated by “state,” like *imperium*. But since Spinoza gives *civitas* a special, technical meaning in TP iii, 1—“the whole body of the state,” which I take to mean “all the citizens of the state, considered as citizens of that state”—I decided to reserve “commonwealth” for that passage and others in the TP where that meaning seemed to be in play. This is not every passage where *civitas* occurs even in the TP. Earlier in that work (in i, 3) Spinoza seemed to be using *civitas* simply as a general term for “state,” without giving it any special meaning. And even after he has given it the official definition of iii, 1, there are passages where it does not seem that Spinoza intends to invoke that special meaning (TP iii, 12, for example). But other passages (like TP vii, 19) seem to reflect the official definition, and are accordingly translated “commonwealth.”

COMPASSION

Misericordia

COMPULSION

Coactio

CONDEMN

Damnare, see *Dammum*

CONFIRM

Confirmare

See the discussion of *confirmare* below, under PROVE.

CONJECTURE

Conjectura, *bariolari*

There may be some differences in meaning between these terms, but I have not thought it desirable to try to reflect that in the translation. Arguably, *bariolari* should mean “to divine,” but that doesn’t seem right in the few contexts where it occurs.

CONSENT

Consensus

Sometimes *consensus* is translated “agreement,” discussed above, under AGREE, AGREEMENT. Sometimes it’s translated “consent,” also discussed above. We also have contexts in which something *consentaneus* with something else is simply consistent with it, or in agreement with it (TTP ii, 43, 54).

CONSTANCY

Constantia

The recurrent notion of having a constant heart (i.e., *animi constantia*, in TTP, i, 40; ii, 31; iii, 45; iv, 7, 21, 38, 42, 50; x, 17, 18; xvi, 42; xvii, 13; Ep. 76, IV/318) is clearly very important for Spinoza’s moral philosophy. Cf. IV/259/22ff.

CONTEXT, CONTINUITY

Contextus

The Latin term has both meanings.

CONTINGENCY

Contingentia

TTP xix, 48, is a passage which deserves attention in the debate over Spinoza’s necessitarianism.

CONTRACT, COVENANT

Pactum, *foedus*, *contractus*

The term Spinoza normally uses in the TTP to refer to the human agreement to set up a state is *pactum* (or the cognate verb *pacisci*). Cf. TTP xvi, 14–15, 20, 23, 25. This terminology seems to be absent from the TP, which has encouraged some to say that Spinoza abandons the idea of a social contract in that work (perhaps for the reason suggested in the annotation of TTP xvi, 20). Still, the idea

GLOSSARY-INDEX

of a social contract remains present in the TP, even if it may not involve explicit mutual promises. See the Preface to the TP, and above, AGREE, AGREEMENT.

Spinoza also uses *pactum* quite frequently to refer the promises made by God to human beings, or the mutual agreements between God and human beings. (Sometimes divine covenants are unilateral, as in Genesis 12; sometimes they involve reciprocal promises, as in Exodus 19. On this, see Freedman 1964 and Curley 2004.) In religious contexts I use “covenant” for *pactum*; in political contexts, “contract.” I find no suggestion that Spinoza distinguishes between contracts and covenants in the way Hobbes did in *De cive* ii, 9–10 or *Leviathan* xiv, 9–11.

Spinoza also uses *foedus* quite frequently to refer to divine covenants. When he uses this term for an agreement between human beings, it usually refers to an alliance between nations, although the names he uses for the Dutch Republic (in TTP xvii, 54, and TP vii, 30) suggest that he thinks of it as a kind of alliance, rather than a unified state.

Contractus does not occur that frequently. In the TTP, first in xvi, 43, where it refers to an agreement between two states, which might be called a treaty, and is explicitly said to be binding just so long as the parties find it mutually advantageous. *Pactum* and *contractus* seem to be treated as synonyms.

CONTRADICTION, INCOHERENCE
Repugnantia

CORRUPTION
Adulterium, corruptio

COUNCIL
Concilium, consilium

COVENANT
See CONTRACT

CREDULITY
Credulitas

Credulitas does not always have the negative connotations of its English

cognate, and sometimes requires translation by something like “trustingness.” A clear case occurs at TTP xiii, 14.

CRIME
Scelus

CROWD
Turba

CRUELTY
Saevitia

CUNNING
Astutus

For discussion, see SHREWD.

DANGER, RISK
Periculum

DEATH
Mors

DECENCY
See HONORABLE

DECEPTION
Dolus, fraus
For discussion, see FRAUD.

DECISION
Placitum, sententia, arbitrium, decretum

Any of the Latin terms may require translation by “decision” or “decree.” For *decretum* those are the only English terms I use. But though the other three Latin terms may all, in certain contexts, be translated “decision” or “decree,” sometimes they seem to require quite different treatment. So *placitum* frequently requires translation by “fancy” and *sententia* very frequently by “opinion.” There is an adjective related to *arbitrium*, *arbitraris*, which occurs only once (in TTP xi, 4), and seems to mean “discretionary.”

DECREE
Decretum, decretare

Akkerman (A, 503n) points out that *decretare* is not a classical term, and refers specifically to the act of making a religious decree. Spinoza seems to regard *decretale* as having the same connotation.

GLOSSARY

At TTP vi, 43, God's *decretum* is identified with the action and order of nature.

DEDUCTION, DEDUCE

Deduction, to deduce, show, etc.

I've allowed myself a certain freedom in translating terms in this family. It does not seem to me that arguments Spinoza refers to as deductions are deductive by our lights. For example, I don't think that in TTP iv, 45, Spinoza means to attribute to Solomon a claim about what can be deduced from *scientia*. Similarly with the view ascribed to Paul in iv, 48.

DEED, ACTION, FACT

Factum

Generally I avoid using "fact" for *factum*, so as not to seem to be slanting the translation toward my interpretation of Spinoza's metaphysics. I think the only place where I've used "fact" in this volume is at III/169/32, where it seemed harmless. But I do think that Spinoza thought about truth mainly in terms of a correspondence between thought and reality. The best evidence for this seems to me to be CM i, 6.

DEFENDER

Vindex, defensor

DELUSION; TO RAVE, BE INSANE, MAD

Delirium, delirare

DEMOCRACY

Democratia

In TTP xvi, 26, a democracy is defined as "a general [*universus*] assembly of men which has, as a body, the supreme right to do everything in its power." *Universus* might be understood to mean that all men in the society, without exception, are members of the governing body. But I translate it by "general" here, because in TTP xx, 5, Spinoza defines a democratic state as one in which all *or a great many of* the people have the rule" (my emphasis). These definitions seem fairly traditional, as does the definition in TP ii, 17, where

a democracy is a form of government in which the body which has sovereignty is made up of "the common multitude."

Later in the TP, however, Spinoza's definitions change. In TP viii, 1, and xi, 1, it appears that a democracy is any form of government in which membership in the governing body is a matter of right, not the choice of the existing members of the governing body. That right might be hereditary, or acquired by birth on the state's territory (even if not to citizens), or based on service to the state. Depending on the criteria by which one acquires this right, it seems that it might be enjoyed by only a few. See also ARISTOCRACY, and the comments in McShea 1968 and Balibar 1985b/1989.

Spinoza thinks the original form of most states was democratic (TP viii, 12). Similarly Hobbes had thought that any non-democratic government must arise out of an initial democracy. Cf. *Leviathan* xviii, 1. But in Hobbes democracy might not last beyond the initial assembly which chose a form of government, and the government might go immediately from democracy to monarchy. Spinoza seems to envisage a more gradual process, with aristocracy being the natural second stage, and monarchy developing out of that.

DEMONSTRATION

Demonstratio

Spinoza regularly claims to demonstrate the things he is arguing for, even though the claims do not always fit the model of a demonstration according to which it involves deduction from self-evident premises, transmitting the absolute certainty of the premises to the conclusion. (The same is also true of some of his correspondents, like Steno.) See the discussion under NATURAL LIGHT.

For the notion of a "probative" demonstration (*demonstratio ostensiva*, equated with a *demonstratio positiva* at IV/278), see the note at IV/274.

GLOSSARY-INDEX

DESIRE

Cupiditas, libido

Generally *cupiditas* and its cognates have a somewhat negative—in some cases, very negative—connotation. This is particularly true of *libido*, which tends to be thought of as an immoderate, overwhelming, or capricious (but not generally sexual) desire.

DETERMINE, DETERMINATE, LIMITED

Determinare, determinatus

Classically *determinare* commonly means to mark out the limits of something, or confine something within certain limits. This use frequently occurs, notably in Letter 35. The causal meaning which also frequently occurs (e.g., in IV/172/17) seems to have arisen in the medieval period.

DEVOTION

Devotio

In TTP xvii, 90, Spinoza equates *devotio* with a combination of love (*amor*) and wonder (*admiratio*).

DISDAIN

Contemptus

DIVINITY

Numen

DOCTRINE

Doctrina, dogma

The Latin *dogma* should not be translated by the English “dogma,” which now frequently has the connotation, not present in the Latin, of “an imperious or arrogant declaration of opinion” (OED), of uncritical and unjustified acceptance. Spinoza uses the term *dogma* to describe the conclusions he himself has reached about prophecy, on the basis of his careful examination of scripture (TTP vi, 65), and I do not think that in that context he wishes to criticize himself. Similarly, he uses *dogma* to refer to the simple (and presumably evident) teachings of Jesus in TTP xi, 22, where he is contrasting them favorably with the philosophical speculations engaged in by Paul. Since

dogma in these contexts seems to be simply a synonym for *doctrina*, I have used “doctrine” to translate them both.

Sometimes Spinoza uses *dogma* to characterize the teachings of someone who speaks with authority, without offering reasons for what he says (e.g., TTP xi, 4, 7). I don’t see implicit criticism in these contexts, and in those cases I have used “authoritative judgment” for *dogma*. I revert to “doctrine” in TTP xiv, 10, where Spinoza is introducing the *dogmata* of the universal faith. I take it that what makes Spinoza favor the term *dogma* there is simply the fact that he is attempting to define the creed of a universal religion, but that nothing is implied about the manner in which these doctrines are held. It’s a matter of some importance to Spinoza that the doctrines defining the universal religion be few in number. Cf. TTP xi, 22; xix, 54 and 62.

In the one occurrence of the adverb, *dogmaticæ* (TTP xv, 5), I have rendered it “as doctrine.” Cf. Letter 42 (IV/210) on a distinction all theologians are alleged to accept.

DOGMATIST

Dogmaticus

Spinoza uses *dogmaticus* in only one context, TTP xv, 1, where he opposes it to *scepticus*. He does not define *dogmaticus*, but does define *scepticus* as someone who denies the certainty of reason. I presume then that a *dogmaticus* is someone who affirms the certainty of reason. By that criterion Spinoza would consider himself a *dogmaticus*. This would be consistent with what I understand to be his evaluatively neutral use of the term *dogma*. What is objectionable about the dogmatists considered in TTP xv is not their belief in the certainty of reason, but their belief that we must interpret Scripture in a way which makes it consistent with what we know through reason.

DOUBT

Dubitatio

GLOSSARY

DREAM

Somnium

DUTY

Officium

Officium has a range of meanings—including function, office, service, favor—and often it is difficult to tell which best fits the context. But *duty* is perhaps the most common translation. The occurrences in TTP v are particularly interesting.

EGYPT, EGYPTIAN

Aegyptus

ELITE

Optimi

“Elite” is my preferred translation for *optimi*, but I would not claim that Spinoza thinks those who are considered the “elite” in any particular society are in fact the best members of that society, but just that they are widely thought to be.

END

Finis

Spinoza has no hesitation about ascribing ends to things. Usually it seems most natural to suppose that the ends are those of humans (e.g., TTP iii, 20; iv, 5, 9, 13–15; vii, 56; TP v, 6), though it’s still a matter of debate among Spinoza scholars whether he allows that humans may act for the sake of an end. (See my exchange with Bennett in Curley and Moreau 1990.) I think the view that he denies ends to God is, or should be, universal, given the firm rejection of divine teleology in the Appendix to Part I of the *Ethics*. There are some passages in the TTP which might encourage attributing ends to God (e.g., TTP ii, 53; xiv, 36), but I think these should be understood as an accommodation to popular ways of thought.

ENDURANCE

Tolerantia

In general Spinoza does not use *tolerantia* with the meaning their English cognate now generally has: the practice of being, or disposition to be, patient with

or indulgent to, the opinions or practices of others (OED). But *tolerare* does occur in that sense in Van Velthuysen, where tolerance of different forms of worship is approved (Letter 42, IV/215/32) and in Spinoza, where tolerance of absurdities, like the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist, is not approved (Letter 76, IV/319/11).

ENMITY, ENEMY

Hostilitas

ENVY

Invidia

EQUALITY

Aequalitas

As a strictly mathematical concept, equality finds its most interesting use in Spinoza’s discussion of gaming in Letter 38. The index ignores other mathematical uses.

Uses not strictly mathematical tend to be more interesting philosophically, as when Spinoza argues that God cares equally for all (TTP vi, 37), and that the Jews would have been no less blessed if God had called everyone equally to salvation (TTP iii, 4). Political contexts emphasize that not all men are equally able to do all things (TTP v, 19), and that men find it extremely hard to bear being subservient to their equals (TTP v, 22). As a result, society will be best organized if men do not have to be subservient to their equals (TTP v, 24; xvii, 87). All are equal in the state of nature; so they should remain equal in civil society (TTP xvi, 36). Spinoza hopes to achieve this by requiring that laws be enacted by common consent, so that all citizens remain equally free (TTP v, 25).

In the TP, however, the emphasis is on monarchies and aristocracies, where it is given that not all men are (politically) equal. But there preserving as much equality as possible among the citizens is an important goal (TP vii, 18, 20; viii, 11). Great inequality among the citizens leads to envy, constant grumbling, and, in the end, rebellions (TP vii, 13).

GLOSSARY-INDEX

EQUITY, FAIRNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS

Aequitas, aequus

I find it difficult to translate *aequitas* and its cognates consistently. The phrase *aequum et bonum* occurs with some frequency in the TTP; when it does, I have consistently translated it as “the right and the good.” Cf. ii, 10, 34; iii, 37; vii, 11; xiv, 30; xv, 30. “The just and the good” would be a plausible alternative, but I wanted to reserve “just” for *justus*. Spinoza does distinguish between *justitia* and *aequitas* in various places (e.g., TTP xix, 8 and 19), and I wanted a way to reflect that distinction.

In the quotation from Ecclesiastes in iii, 38, *aequus* seems to require “righteous” (sanctioned, I think, by Stelten’s entry on *aequitas*, but not, so far as I can see, by Lewis and Short or the OLD). In this spirit, at TTP vii, 30, where the kingdom of God (*regnum divinum*) is said to be that of those who love *aequitas*, I chose “righteousness” as the best term for *aequitas*. On the other hand, at TP iv, 1, where *aequum* is equated with what must be done, and *iniquum* with what must not be done, I felt that the passage called for “right” and “wrong.”

Sometimes “equity” seems to be the right translation of *aequitas*. An example occurs at TTP xvi, 42, where Spinoza equates equity with justice, understood as a settlement of disputes which treats all parties as equals, and does not treat either the rich or the poor unfairly.

In TTP xvii, 15, where Spinoza contends that people’s judgments about what is *aequum* and *iniquum* are commonly biased by self-interest and other affects, I have translated these terms “fair” and “unfair.” Considerations of fairness seem to dominate at TP vi, 32; vii, 22 and 28.

ERROR

Error, menda

Sometimes “error” translates its Latin cognate, sometimes (without any distinction that I can see) *menda*. TTP x, 30–31,

seems to show that the two terms are used interchangeably.

ESCAPE

Effugium

Spinoza follows Tremellius in using the Latin *effugium* to translate a well-known passage in Paul’s letter to the Romans in which he maintains that, even without the benefit of divine revelation, men are “without excuse” (as his language is usually translated) if they disobey God’s law (1:20), because what the law requires is “written on their hearts” (2:15). Cf. TTP iv, 47, and xvi, 53 (incl. ADN. XXXIV). Though saying that men are without escape gives the passage an unfamiliar ring, the discussion at iv, 47–50, does not suggest a serious misunderstanding of Paul’s thought.

ESSENCE

Essentia

The phrase “ideal essence” is rare in Spinoza, occurring in this volume in TP ii, 2, and elsewhere, it seems, only in Volume I at IV/77/33.

ESTEEM, SELF-ESTEEM, LOVE OF ESTEEM

Gloria

See the discussion in the Glossary to Volume I.

ETERNITY; ETERNAL, EVERLASTING; FROM ETERNITY; TO ETERNITY, FOREVER

Aeternitas; aeternus; ab aeterno; in aeternum

If Spinoza adhered strictly to the usage defined in E I D8, he would use *aeternitas* and its cognates only in connection with necessary beings. But Spinoza is not strict in his use of *aeternitas* and related terms. Sometimes he uses them (contrary to the definition of eternity at E I D8) when the entity in question is not an absolutely necessary being. Clear cases occur in TTP xvii, 85, 103, 112; xviii, 1, 6; TP vii, 25, 27; and TP viii, 3. In such cases I have taken the liberty of using terms like “everlasting,” “permanent,” and “forever.” Cf. Ramond’s note to TP x, 9.

EVALUATION

Aestimatio

EVENT

Casus

EVIDENT

Constare

Constare (as an impersonal verb) is one of several expressions Spinoza uses to express the idea that something is clearly established (not usually self-evident in the sense that notion commonly has in English, but typically made clear by the evidence available). This expression and others equivalent to it occur so frequently that it would be tedious to enumerate them all. The indices are only representative. That usage of *constare* is definitely the most frequent in our texts. But it also occurs in the sense of “consist of” or “be made up of.”

EVIL, BAD

Malus

In the Glossary to Volume I, I noted that while I would have liked to consistently translate *malus* by “bad,” on the ground that “evil” has connotations which seem inappropriate to Spinoza’s philosophy, whereas “bad” doesn’t, I found it impossible to adopt that policy. I still have the same ambivalence, but hope now to give a better explanation of my practice. I begin with a much condensed summary of the OED accounts of current usage of “evil” and “bad.”

In modern English “bad” is typically used in a privative sense to mean “not good,” specifically, of poor quality, or lacking good or favorable qualities, or not of the expected or required quality. So, food may be bad because unpalatable, or unfit for consumption; a currency may be bad because debased; air may be bad because not healthy; a person may be bad because not dependable; and so on.

“Evil” tends to have what the OED describes (unhappily, perhaps) as a more “positive” sense, often implying,

not just a failure to live up to certain standards, but moral depravity, wickedness, or viciousness. It often implies a much stronger condemnation than “bad,” and blameworthiness. It is “the most comprehensive adjectival expression of disapproval, dislike, or disparagement,” but “in modern, colloquial English it is little used.”

Spinoza tends to regard human failings as things we may regard as bad, but should not blame. They are not the consequences of uncaused decisions by a faculty of free will, which makes the bad person the ultimate originator of his bad deeds. They are the inevitable results of the history of the world prior to the bad deeds. I think this is why Spinoza writes, in Letter 78, that someone who goes mad because of a dog’s bite is to be excused, though rightly suffocated. (Similarly, and perhaps more helpfully, in Letter 58.) In this spirit he will write that his aim is not to curse human actions, but to understand them. (Cf. TP i, 4, with E III Pref.)

But I don’t think this prevents him from calling bad conduct wicked. From TP iv, 4, it seems that he considered Nero an example of such conduct. And from TP v, 7, it seems that what he admired most in Machiavelli was his ability to coolly explain why the features of tyrants’ political situations tend to make them tyrannical, the better to see what kind of environment is needed to avoid such consequences. Spinoza is not interested in assigning blame. But this does not mean that he will accept bad conduct and not try to do something about it.

People who think we should never use the term “evil” to translate *malus* should make a survey of the passages where Spinoza uses the closely related term, *malitia*. Sometimes the English cognate “malice” will do as a translation of *malitia*, but sometimes I think “wickedness” is unavoidable. See, for example, III/162, 165 (2x), 182, 274, 295, and IV/308.

GLOSSARY-INDEX

EXAMPLE, PATTERN, COPY

Exemplar, exemplum

There's considerable overlap in the meanings of the two Latin terms. TTP i, 20, is a key passage in which Spinoza uses both terms, apparently taking *exemplar* to be a pattern or model, and *exemplum* to be an example of that pattern. But the use of *exemplaria* to mean copies is very common (e.g., in Letters 29 [IV/165], 46 [IV/233, 234], 62 [IV/273], 72 [IV/305]). *Exemplum* is frequently used in the phrase *exempli gratia*, occurrences of which are not indexed. Mostly it seems to mean "example," and I think never means "pattern" or "model."

EXCOMMUNICATE

Excommunicare

Though *excommunicare* occurs infrequently, it's important to be clear about its use. Spinoza's own excommunication by his congregation in 1656 was a turning point in his life; his treatment of this concept in TTP xviii and xix may bear the marks of that event, though he never explicitly calls attention to his own excommunication. Typical English use of "excommunication" is colored by Christian usage, where it normally means "being cut off from participation in communion and other religious sacraments or services." Since the Jewish tradition does not have these sacraments, we might wonder what excommunication can mean there. The following summarizes the discussions in Nadler 1999, 120–29 and Greenberg and Cohn 2007.

The Hebrew term often translated "excommunication," *cherem*, might better be translated "ban." (Sometimes it is.) The *cherem* was frequently used as a disciplinary measure in the Amsterdam Sephardic community, where it was inflicted for a wide variety of offenses, some quite minor, others more serious. These might involve violations of specifically religious rules (e.g., regarding the purchase of kosher meat) or offenses against moral rules not peculiar to the

Jewish community (such as the prohibition on adultery).

The punishment varied greatly in its severity. It always involved some form of separation from the community, which cut the excommunicated person off, both from participation in the congregation's religious life and from any business or social dealings with its members. But it was not generally expected that the separation would be permanent. Often its duration was quite short, and might be terminated by performing some penance. Though the power to excommunicate had traditionally been vested in the community's rabbinical court, in seventeenth-century Amsterdam this was a decision for the lay leaders (normally in consultation with the rabbis on questions involving possible violations of Jewish law).

The *cherem* proclaimed against Spinoza was unusually severe in the vehemence of its language and in the absence of any suggestion that he might have his sentence lifted by showing repentance. It made it impossible for him to continue running the family business with his brother, and forced him to seek some other way to make a living. His case also illustrates that excommunication was not used only to punish or correct bad behavior, but also to suppress the expression of heterodox ideas. (Spinoza was accused of "evil opinions" and "evil acts," but the document proclaiming the *cherem* does not say what the acts were, and it seems likely that they consisted of failures to observe the requirements of Jewish law.)

The use of the *cherem* as a disciplinary measure is apparently not biblical, but dates from the first two centuries of the common era. The later concept shows a significant evolution from the biblical usage, where *cherem* has quite a different meaning. Greenberg defines *cherem* as "the status of that which is separated from common use or contact either because it is proscribed as

GLOSSARY

an abomination to God or because it is consecrated to Him.” This might include inanimate objects, like buildings or cities, and was not limited to people. This helps to explain some of Spinoza’s examples.

EXCUSE, EXCUSABLE

Excusare, excusabilis

The question whether, prior to revelation, men are excusable for their disobedience to divine law, arises at several places in the TTP (e.g., at iv, 47–50; xvi, 6; and xvi, 53). The question whether Spinoza’s necessitarianism makes everyone excusable is prominent in the correspondence with Oldenburg (Letters 75, 77, and 78).

EXPERIENCE

Experientia

Spinoza is commonly classed (along with Descartes and Leibniz) as a rationalist in epistemology, where that label is supposed to mean something like: someone who allows experience to play no significant role in the acquisition of knowledge, preferring to rely on deduction from self-evident truths. For a more detailed discussion, see Curley 1992a or 1973. Most competent historians of the period now reject this stereotype, for reasons of the sort discussed in the first article cited. Tracking the references to experience in this volume would provide a good deal of evidence to raise doubts. See also FOUNDATION.

EXPERIENCED, EXPERT

Peritus

Absent indications to the contrary, my default translation of *peritus* would be “experienced” or “expert.” “Learned” would also be a candidate, but I reserve that for *doctus*. I note that *peritus* is Spinoza’s standard translation of the Hebrew חכם. In those contexts I have adopted “wise.” Spinoza frequently contrasts the *periti* with the uneducated multitude, the common people, whom he thinks of as the primary audience of Scripture. In those contexts I’ve also used “wise” for *periti*.

EXPERTISE

Peritia

EXPLANATION

Explicatio

EXPLICITLY

Expresse, ex professo

Classical usage would suggest that *ex professo* ought to mean “openly” or “intentionally.” Glazemaker consistently takes it to mean the latter, and sometimes that fits. Notably in TTP vii, 56. But more often Spinoza seems to use this phrase as a synonym for *expresse*. Cf. TTP vii, 28, and xiii, 24, for clear cases. And often “in detail” seems to better fit the context.

EXPRESS

Exprimere

Deleuze 1968/1992 was certainly right to emphasize the importance of this term for Spinoza’s philosophy, and it was a defect of Volume I that I did not pay it more attention in the Glossary of that volume. To mention only occurrences in Part I of the *Ethics*, it crops up in a number of quite critical passages: D6 & its Exp.; P8S2 (II/50), P10S (II/52), P11, P14D, P16D, P19D, P20D, P23D, P25C, P29S, P31D, P32D, and P36D. Regrettably, at this point I still don’t feel able to say anything helpful about it.

FACE

Facies

It’s been common in English translations of Spinoza to render the phrase *facies totius universi*, which Spinoza gives in Letter 64 as an example of a mediate infinite mode of extension, by “the face of the whole universe,” and then to explain that Spinoza identifies this with the highest order individual which he describes in E II L7D. I don’t mind perpetuating this translation, provided that we accompany it with a proper explanation, but that its usual interpretation is right seems to me dubious.

Most occurrences of *facies* in Spinoza are in his translations of biblical passages where Moses is said to have spoken to God “face to face.” In those contexts (TTP i, 14, 21, 24; ii, 43; viii, 15, 17) “face” is no doubt right (though it may need an explanation). But those passages are irrelevant to deciding how to translate Letter 64.

When *facies* is not used to translate the biblical texts (e.g., in TTP xvii, 18; TP vi, 2; vii, 25; and in Volume I, at II/136/10), it generally seems to mean “form” or “aspect.” Those alternatives deserve to be considered in Letter 64, since they might avoid some of the difficulties generated by some views of the infinite modes.

I take it that what Spinoza is identifying in Letter 64 as the mediate infinite mode of extension is the *facies*—the form here, I would think—of the whole universe, which is not the same as the whole universe itself. The universe has a great deal of change going on within it, but it remains the same individual over time because its form—the way in which its parts communicate their motion to one another—remains constant. (Cf. the definition of a complex individual at II/99/27–100/5.)

This has the philosophical advantage that it frees us from having to explain how the mediate infinite mode of extension could follow from the absolute nature of the divine attributes (as it does, according to E I PP 21–23), when the individual things which (on the usual view) make up the immediate infinite mode of extension, the finite modes, do not (E I P28 and Sch.).

FAITH *Fides*

Fides is highly ambiguous. In religious contexts it is normally best translated by “faith,” though sometimes I have chosen to translate *fides* by “faith” in contexts where it seemed to me that “belief” would have been an equally defensible choice (and where other translators have

chosen “belief”). E.g., TTP iv, 18–19. In moral or political contexts meanings like “good faith” or “trust” come to the fore.

Spinoza is highly critical of faith as conceived by his contemporaries, claiming that it has come to be equated with nothing but credulity and prejudices. (TTP Pref., 16, 20) Sometimes (e.g., TTP i, 1, 4) *fides* seems to have the connotation it often has in English: a belief based on testimony or authority, not on experience or rational argument. In these contexts it is apt to be modified by *sola* or *mera*. In TTP xiv, 13, Spinoza gives a definition of faith designed to dissolve the controversy over the relative importance of faith and works by effectively defining faith in terms of works (cf. also TTP Pref., 27–28).

But the contexts where *fides* should (or at least *can*) be translated by “faith” seem relatively unproblematic. The contexts where *fides* signifies a moral quality seem to me more difficult and I have helped myself to a variety of alternatives: good faith, trust, assurance, loyalty, allegiance. It seems surprising that a philosopher who holds that promises in the state of nature are not binding (TTP xvi, 17–19; TP ii, 12) should attach the importance he does to the qualities he associates with *fides*, which he describes as the chief protection of the republic (TTP xvi, 21). See also the Glossary entry PROMISE.

TTP xv, 11, is an important passage, which displays three different meanings of *fides* and its cognate verb *fidere* at work in the same paragraph.

FATHER *Pater*

FAULT, GUILT *Culpa*

FEAR *Metus, timor*

So far as I can see, Spinoza makes no distinction between these terms in the works translated in Volume II. Cf. III/5/34–36/1, III/60/32–61/1;

III/357/20ff. In Volume I it had seemed that there might be an important distinction. Cf. I, 637.

FEIGN

fingere, affingere

Although I continue to think (as I did in Volume I) that *fingere* is often a technical term which might well be rendered by “hypothesize,” I have thought it better, in Volume II, to be more flexible in my treatment of this term. An interesting context is III/34/15–17, where it’s clear that Spinoza thinks the rabbis’ “hypothesis” has no credibility.

If Spinoza makes a distinction between *fingere* and *affingere*, I have not been able to discern it.

FLATTERY, FLATTER

Adulatio, assentatio

Normally the term is *adulatio* or some cognate. The flatterer is a stock character in classical Roman comedy. But often the notion of flattery is expressed or implicit in the idea of giving what may be a merely verbal assent to some proposition, for the purpose of pleasing some political or religious authority. Here the idea is often expressed by the verb *assentari*. The translation may speak of “giving lip service.” But the reader should be aware that the idea of flattery is implied.

FOLLY

Stultitia

FORCE, VIOLENCE

Vis

FORTUNE

Fortuna

Spinoza defines *fortuna* at TTP iii, 11, as God’s guidance, insofar as it directs human affairs through external and unforeseen causes. Later (iv, 46), he omits the qualification that the external causes should be unforeseen. Though this may bring him closer to Machiavelli’s usage in *The Prince*, ch. 25, as ALM suggest, I don’t think we should make

too much of the omission. The uncertainty of the causes of our good or bad luck seems to be central to Spinoza’s conception of fortune in the Preface of the TTP. Perhaps Spinoza’s most careful and illuminating definition of this term occurs in Ep. 37, IV/188, where he defines it as an event which, though *it happens according to definite and fixed laws*, has causes unknown to us *and foreign to our nature and power*. Surprisingly (as it seems to me) he argues there that the intellect is not liable, as the body is, to accidents, and that our clear and distinct perceptions depend on our absolute power, not on fortune.

See Moreau 1990.

FOUNDATION

Fundamentum

Spinoza is clearly a foundationalist in his political philosophy, insofar as he believes in trying to support his conclusions by deducing them from initial assumptions which are in some sense unquestionable. But I think we misunderstand his foundationalism if we suppose that he held the foundations in this area to be self-evident truths, which need only to be understood to compel our assent. Spinoza’s foundations, I suggest, are propositions which it would be foolish to question, because the evidence for them is so good, and probably propositions we would normally accept without requiring argument.

A good example of the foundationalism at work is TTP v, 17–25, where the foundations are general propositions about human nature, whose truth we can see partly by reflecting on our daily experience of ourselves and other human beings, and partly by the study of history. We might summarize his foundations as follows:

People aren’t able, by their unaided efforts, to satisfy all their needs and desires. Even if they were, the limitations on their time and energy would

make their lives wretched if they couldn't call on the cooperation of others to protect them from enemies and produce the necessities of life. This is especially clear when we take into account, not just their basic needs for such things as food, shelter, and clothing, but also the things they need to develop their minds. However, though it's supremely in their interest to cooperate, they don't always see this. And even when they do, they don't always choose to do what they know is best for themselves. Often their passions get in the way of cooperation. So they'll do best at satisfying their interests if they live in a society whose laws compel people to do what they would do if they clearly saw what is in their interest and had the self-control needed to pursue that interest wholeheartedly. Nevertheless, though it's very much in everyone's interest to live in a society ordered by laws, people are very resistant to being told what to do. When they act solely from fear, they act very unwillingly. If a ruler tries to govern by compulsion and fear alone, he won't last long. Stable rule requires that the people see the advantage of what the laws require them to do.

These features of human nature define the political problem for Spinoza: what sorts of institutions are required if the government is to be one under which people will live willingly?

FRAUD

Fraus, dolus

I believe Spinoza uses *fraus* and *dolus* interchangeably. A good passage to illustrate this is TTP xvi, 17–18. I have freely used “fraud,” “deception,” and “intent to deceive” for both terms, depending on what seemed best in the context.

FREEDOM

Libertas

Like Rousseau Spinoza identifies political freedom with obedience to a law the citizen has participated in making. Cf. TTP v, 23–25. TTP xvi, 32 (usefully amplified in TP ii, TP ii, 11) is a paradigmatic statement of Spinoza's conception of personal freedom: the only free person is the one who lives according to the guidance of reason. James 2009 is quite helpful here.

GENERATION

See AGE

GIFT

Donum

GLORY, SELF-ESTEEM, LOVE OF ESTEEM

Gloria

Although “glory” seems perfectly satisfactory in the frequently occurring phrase *gloria Dei*, it seems not to work well when Spinoza uses *gloria* to refer to a psychological state of a human being, as I believe he does in TTP iii, 1.

GOD, YAHWEH, THE LORD

Deus, Jehova, Dominus

Most English Bibles have used “The LORD” to represent occurrences of the Tetragrammaton, יהוה, the name God uses to identify himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14. These letters would be transliterated YHWH, and apparently pronounced *Yahweh*, if it were permissible to utter the divine name. But at some point YHWH came to be thought too sacred to pronounce. When the Masoretes added vowels pointing to the text, they used the vowels of *Adonai* (“My Lord”) for YHWH. *Adonai* was the term substituted for YHWH when the Bible was read in the synagogue. The Masoretic pointing of YHWH led to a common use of *Jehova* (in Latin) and “Jehovah” (in English), a transliteration based on a misunderstanding of how YHWH would have been pronounced, if it were pronounced. But it seems “Jehovah” does not accurately represent any form of the Name ever used in Hebrew” (NOAB,

p. xii). For the history and meaning of YHWH, see Tryggve Mettinger, *In Search of God: The Meaning and Message of the Everlasting Names* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), ch. 2.

Generally Spinoza uses *Deus* to translate YHWH. When he does, I use “God.” Sometimes he uses *Jehova*. When he does, I normally use “Yahweh,” which is now replacing “Jehovah.” Occasionally he uses *Dominus*. When he does, I use “the LORD.”

Spinoza’s policy seems to be to use *Deus* generally for YHWH and *Jehova* or *Dominus* only when *Deus* is used in the same context, either for some other divine name, such as *Elohim*, or as a general term rather than a proper name. This would explain the uses of *Jehova* in TTP i, 32, and the reversion to *Deus* in the remainder of that passage; it also explains the uses of *Jehova*, *Dominus*, and *Deus* in TTP i, 15, ii, 36, 37, 39, v, 10, vi, 31, xii, 18, and xiii, 10–19. The latter passage, where Spinoza is commenting on Exodus 6:3, contains his most extensive discussion of the divine name, though ii, 36, is also important.

In Letter 2 (Volume I, p. 165) Spinoza had derived his preferred definition of God, as a being consisting of infinite attributes, from the Cartesian definition of God as a supremely perfect being. That maneuver reappears here, in Letter 60, where it receives more of an explanation than it had in Letter 2. In the TTP xiv, 25, Spinoza reverts to the more popular definition.

GOOD
Bonus

HABIT
habitus

Sometimes *habitus* refers to a person’s dress (e.g., at III/8). But more commonly it refers to a habitual practice. Though the phrase *virtutis habitus* (here translated “habit of virtue”) does not occur often, the contexts in which it occurs seem to be quite important.

HANDMAID
Ancilla

That reason (or philosophy or natural knowledge) ought to be the handmaid of theology (or sacred doctrine, or revelation) was a common medieval doctrine, implying that philosophy is inferior and subservient to theology. Cf. Aquinas ST I, i, 5, ad 2. ALM trace it back to Peter Damian and Albertus Magnus. In TTP xv, 5, Spinoza attributes this doctrine to Alfakhar.

HAPPINESS, PROSPERITY
Felicitas

“Happiness” is my most frequent translation of *felicitas*, but “prosperity” frequently seems most apt, and “good fortune” is not rare.

HARM, LOSS, EXPENSE
Damnum

HARMFUL (RUINOUSLY?)
Perniciosus

It’s hard to be sure how strong a translation this term calls for. Sometimes it’s tempting to render it as “fatal” (e.g., in TTP xix, 23). This would not be inconsistent with traditional Latin usage. In some contexts something like that seems called for. So we have “ruinously bad” in TTP xii, 4. But generally I think “harmful” is enough.

HARMONY
Concordia

HAVE, HOLD, OBTAIN, ACHIEVE, ETC.
Obtinere

HEART
Animus, cor

Animus can be translated “mind,” and sometimes it is. But in some contexts that would create problems (e.g., where it occurs in a list with *mens*, and seems to be distinguished from *mens*, as in TTP i, 35 and 37). Frequently “heart” seems to be best, because it seems to me that Spinoza uses the Latin term to refer to the mind conceived in the broadest

sense, thought of not only as an intellect, but also as having feelings, volitions, and moral dispositions (these aspects being emphasized). Contexts illustrating that usage well are TTP Pref., 33; i, 33, 35; iii, 37 and 41; vi, 42; vii, 5; xx, 44. See also TTP Pref., 5, where *superstitione animi*, literally “superstition of the heart,” is rendered “genuine superstition.”

To translate *cor* by “heart” seems to require less defense.

HISTORY

Historia

Historia is ambiguous between its English cognate, “history,” where the implication is that the storyteller is understood to be relating (to the best of his ability) what actually happened, and “story,” where the storyteller has no such intent.

Sometimes it’s difficult to tell which sense Spinoza intends. Sometimes it’s quite clear. In TTP ii, 26, Spinoza himself clearly doesn’t believe the story is historically accurate, and I think he suggests some doubt about the intentions of the biblical author. Similarly in TTP iv, 38–39 and x, 16. In such cases I use “story” to translate *historia*.

Where I think there is an intention to relate what actually happened, I use “history.” Examples occur at ii, 8, 26, and 55. Where I want to leave the question of the storyteller’s intentions open, I prefer to use the terms “account” or “narrative.” An important example occurs at TP ii, 6, in connection with the fall. I use the phrase “historical narrative” (e.g., in TTP iv, 18–19, or v, 40) to suggest that the story is one which has the appearance of being a history, though belief in its truth is not required. In Letter 77 (IV/325) I have used “narrative” to translate *historia* on the theory that, although Oldenburg clearly believes in the truth of the gospel accounts, he is trying to persuade Spinoza of their truth, and using “history” to translate *historia* would make him appear to beg the question.

The term *historiographus* occurs only once, in TTP x, 24, where it seems to mean an official annalist. Cf. Droetto/Giancotti, p. 304n33. In one important context (TTP iv, 39) *narratio* clearly indicates an intent to tell a story of what actually happened. There (following Wernham) I have used “record of fact.”

HISTORY OF NATURE

Historia naturae

A technical term taken from Baconian philosophy of science, which prescribes that we begin the investigation of a phenomenon like heat by drawing up tables which record the kinds of situations in which the phenomenon is present, or absent, or varies in degree. Bacon’s *Novum organum*, II, x–xviii, provides a paradigm. That Spinoza takes the interpretation of nature to require this kind of data collection before we arrive at a “definition” of the phenomenon is one more indication that he does not think of the proper method in science as proceeding in an wholly *a priori* fashion.

In her notes on TTP vii, 6, Totaro helpfully calls attention to Spinoza’s use of the term *historia* in his Preface to Part III of *Descartes’ “Principles of Philosophy”* (I/226/13) and to his use of the related term *historiola* in Letter 37 (IV/189a), where Spinoza acknowledges the Baconian ancestry of the term, and contrasts compiling a *historiola* of the mind with understanding the nature of the mind through its first cause.

HISTORY OF SCRIPTURE

Historia Scripturae

Perhaps the most important idea Spinoza introduced into the science of biblical interpretation is that interpreting biblical texts accurately requires a “history of Scripture,” whose requirements are outlined in TTP vii, 15–25. But though Spinoza insists that the method for interpreting Scripture does not differ at all from the method for interpreting nature, in fact the history of Scripture required for understanding

GLOSSARY

Scripture has a strictly historical dimension which is lacking in the history of nature required for understanding nature (as pointed out by ALM, 734–35n 8).

HOLD, GRIP, BIND

Tenere

“To be bound” usually translates the passive of *tenere*.

HOLINESS

Sanctitas

HONOR

Honor

It’s important to keep in mind the ambiguity of this term, which Spinoza, in keeping with classical usage, sometimes uses to refer to a public office. It’s unclear what the sense is in TTP iii, 54.

HONORABLE

Honestus

Honestus and its cognates occur in crucial passages and seem to me to express an important concept in Spinoza’s moral philosophy. Keeping in mind his discussion of *honor* in the opening sections of the TdIE, I take them to signify, not so much that the *honestus* is in fact guided by a sense of honor as that he is deserving of honor. That seems to be the sense, for example, in TTP iii, 12; v, 38; xiv, 4, 19, and 22; xvii, 63; and xx, 29–44, where this language occurs quite frequently.

In contexts like TTP ix, 45 and 56, the relevant notion of the honorable is more conventional, I think: what an ordinary reader in a given community at a certain time would consider decent.

HOPE

Spes

HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis

Spinoza’s use of the Latin *hypothesis* seems largely consistent with the normal English usage of that word: a supposition made to account for facts taken as known. Cf. IV/166, 174, 176; III/131

(in ADN. XIV). But it’s interesting that he will sometimes use it in connection with assumptions he presumably regards as quite certain. Cf. IV/180.

IMAGINATION

Imaginatio

It’s important to remember that *imaginatio*, in Spinoza’s usage, includes all cases of seeming to perceive something through the senses, even those where the object we seem to perceive is actually there. It also, of course, includes things like dreams and hallucinations. But when Spinoza says that an object of the imagination is *imaginary*, I take that to mean that what we seem to perceive is not actually there. A good context to illustrate this is TTP i, 9. So the classification of prophetic visions as functions of the imagination does not imply that the prophet was, as we might say, imagining something. But when Spinoza says in i, 11, that Samuel heard an imaginary voice, the implication is that what he heard existed in his imagination, but not in reality.

Note also that TTP ii, 4, allows that in principle the imagination can yield certainty *provided* it is supplemented by reasoning.

INDIFFERENCE

Indifferentia

When God is said to be indifferent (e.g., in TTP ii, 15, 35), the idea seems to be that he has no belief about what future human actions will be. When actions are said to be indifferent (e.g., at TTP iv, 20), it is that they are neither good nor bad in themselves, but only become good or bad as a result of some decree.

INFERENCE, PRINCIPLE OF INFERENCE, IMPLICATION

Consequentia

INSANE

Insanus

Spinoza regards some of the people he disagrees with as crazy. He has two

words for this, which he uses more or less equivalently: *insania* and *delirium*. Cf. the index entries for these terms, and particularly TTP Pref., 19; ix, 28.

INSTITUTION

Institutum

Things which are good only by institution—paradigmatically, ceremonies—are not good of themselves, and make no contribution, in themselves, to blessedness. Cf. TTP v, 5, 32–34. *Institutum* is also translated “established practice” in the phrase *jus et institutum naturae*, which occurs infrequently, but in important passages. See *jus*.

INTELLECT

Intellectus

“Intellect” is my preferred term for *intellectus*, though it has the disadvantage that there is no verb paired with it in English, as *intelligere* is paired with it in Latin. But the literature generally translates *intellectus* by its English cognate. I depart from this practice when Spinoza is talking about the wisdom literature, where “understanding” is well-entrenched for the relevant cognitive state.

INTENTION

Mens, animus

Though “intention” is not the default translation for either of the Latin terms, it nevertheless occurs quite frequently.

INVESTIGATE

Investigare

As Spinoza uses it, the Latin term often seems to suggest, not merely seeking the object of the inquiry, but finding it. Hence, the variety of English terms I have chosen to use.

JEALOUS

Zelotypus

JEW

Judaeus

Generally Spinoza uses *Judaeus* simply to refer to Jews, and then it gets

the obvious translation. Occasionally he uses it to refer to the inhabitants of the southern kingdom, Judah, and then I’ve used “man of Judah.” Cf. TTP xviii, 16.

JOY

Laetitia

The OED’s primary definition of “joy” is “a vivid emotion of pleasure arising from a sense of well-being or satisfaction; the feeling or state of being highly pleased or delighted; exultation of spirit; gladness, delight.” This seems to me exactly right for Spinoza’s *laetitia*, in spite of Bennett’s dissent (Bennett 1984, 253). Of course this must be understood, like all of Spinoza’s affects, as a phenomenon which is both mental and physical.

JUDGMENT

Judicium

Generally Spinoza uses *judicium* in the sense of “judgment,” which might be the result of a formal legal proceeding (TTP iv, 8) or a matter of someone’s coming to a certain belief (TTP v, 44; vi, 72) or the faculty by which a person comes to a belief. Notable examples of the latter use occur in TTP Pref., 10, where Spinoza complains that the supporters of monarchy seek to fill men’s free judgment with prejudices, or TTP Pref., 16, where it seems to be the ministers of the church who try to turn men from rational beings into beasts, or TTP Pref., 28, where Spinoza sets the defense of freedom of judgment as one of the goals of his work, or TP vii, 27, where Spinoza remarks that it is a rare virtue to suspend judgment.

Occasionally *judicium* means a court where legal judgments are made, but this seems to be pretty rare (TP viii, 25).

JURIST

Jurisperitus (sometimes two words)

Wernham and Shirley both have “lawyer,” but to me this suggests someone who practices law as a profession, and I don’t think Spinoza intends that. I think all this means is someone learned in the law, not necessarily a practitioner.

For the connotations of the *peritus* component, see *peritia*.

JUSTICE

Justitia

Most of the time terms in this family unproblematically permit translation by their English-language cognates. One atypical case where I have chosen to translate *justus* by “righteous” occurs in TTP xix, 8, where it seemed to me likely that Spinoza was alluding to a passage in Ecclesiastes (9:2) where the term *tsadikim* occurs and is commonly translated “the righteous.” (Also favoring this translation in that context was the fact that Spinoza there opposes *justus* not to *injustus*, but to *impius*.)

KING

Rex

KNOWLEDGE, 'KNOWLEDGE, SCIENCE

Cognitio, scientia, notitia

Some Spinoza scholars (e.g., Bennett 1985, Donagan 1988) have wanted to translate *cognitio* by its English cognate, “cognition.” The main motivation for this seems to be that Spinoza’s *cognitio* is broader than the English “knowledge,” because Spinoza classifies *imaginatio*, which is highly fallible, as a form of *cognitio*. So *cognitio*, unlike the English “knowledge,” does not entail that the proposition “cognized” is true. At most it entails that there is some proposition the cognizer accepts, which may or may not be true, and if true, may or may not be known to be true.¹

But since “cognition” is not nearly as familiar a term in English as “knowledge” is, its use would need to be explained. And if you have to explain “cognition,” why not just use “knowledge,” accompanied by a warning that Spinoza’s Latin term has a wider range than the English term normally has?

This avoids the problem that there is no commonly used verb related to “cognition” as *cognoscere* is related to *cognitio* in Latin. (“Cognize” is largely philosopher’s jargon, which would also need explanation, and which I’m willing to use in this note, but would not willingly put in Spinoza’s mouth.) So in Volume II, I continue to translate *cognitio* by “knowledge,” and *cognoscere* by “know.”

A more difficult and important issue, I think, concerns the relation between *cognitio* and *scientia*. Though Spinoza frequently uses these terms in a way which makes some distinction between them, he can also pass easily from one term to the other without any apparent sense that he is changing the subject. This happens, for example, in TTP i, where he passes from arguing that it’s proper to call natural *cognitio* divine (i, 3) to saying that although natural *scientia* is divine, we shouldn’t call those who pass it on prophets (i, 4). A similar thing happens in TTP ii, 2, where he goes from talking about those who search for *cognitio* of both natural and spiritual matters to talking about those who cultivate true *scientia* (two different groups of people, or one group?), and in TTP iv, 41, where he goes from saying that people disdain natural *cognitio* because it’s common to all, and that the Hebrews were particularly liable to disdain natural *scientia* for that reason. So in my view, sometimes Spinoza uses these terms as if they were equivalent.

But sometimes he clearly doesn’t. And it’s a difficult question to decide what *scientia* means when it’s not treated simply as equivalent to *cognitio*. Frequently Spinoza uses *scientia* in a way which it seems natural to render by “science,” understanding the English term pretty much the way we ordinarily understand it, as including

1. Actually it doesn’t even entail that much, since Spinoza holds that we may continue to imagine something—say, that the sun is about 200 feet away from us—even after we know that the true distance is much greater than that. Cf. E IV P1S.

physical sciences like optics, physics, and astronomy, but also abstract sciences, like mathematics, and practical sciences, like politics. In these cases speaking of something as a science implies something about the truth and grounds for the cognition in question which *cognitio* does not imply, though it's difficult to say exactly what it implies. The closest thing we have in Volume II to an explanation of the special meaning Spinoza attaches to *scientia* comes in TTP i, 48, where he appears to equate having true *scientia* of the prophets' imaginative capacities with being able to explain these phenomena through their first causes. That may not be quite "science" in the ordinary modern sense of the term—it seems to entail a depth of understanding scientists cannot always claim for their results—but it's arguably closely related.

When I have thought it possible, I have rendered *scientia* by the English "science." Examples occur at TTP x, 48, xi, 20, xiii, 4, 7, 29; xv, 38; xix, 62; xx, 26. I note that "science" crops up in the TP (occasionally) because Spinoza thinks that politics, properly engaged in, is a science on a par with the physical sciences. What's particularly striking here is that he thinks of politics as potentially a demonstrative science, even though it depends on experience and knowledge of history (TP i, 1, 4).

In contexts where "science" did not feel right for *scientia*, I have prefixed a prime symbol to "knowledge," thus: 'knowledge. This includes passages where, so far as I could see, Spinoza was treating *scientia* as equivalent to *cognitio* (e.g., in the early passages from the TTP mentioned above), but I wished to alert the reader to the presence of a term which might not mean the same as *cognitio*. But it also includes passages where, in quoting the Bible, Spinoza uses *scientia* to translate Hebrew terms (e.g., *chakmah*, wisdom; *tvunah*, intelligence; *da'at*, knowledge) not easily equated with

"science" in the sense in which we normally understand that term. Cf. TTP iv, 42–45.

The continuation of this passage, iv, 46, is important, suggesting that Spinoza regards the *cognitio* of things as an essential preliminary to *scientia naturalis*, but also the importance he attaches to *scientia*, which leads us to discover the *scientia* of God (v, 12), and to achieve the perfection of our nature, which he identifies with blessedness (v, 19). But note that when Spinoza describes the "knowledge of God" as our highest good (e.g., in TTP iv, 9), the Latin is *cognitio Dei*.

KNOWN THROUGH ITSELF, KNOWN WITHOUT ARGUMENT
notum per se

I continue to believe what I said in Volume I: the common practice of translating *notum per se* by "self-evident" is ill-considered. The influence of Locke on the ordinary English usage of "self-evident" inevitably makes the reader think the proposition is one which deserves and gets "universal and ready assent" as soon as we understand the meaning of the terms. Neither Spinoza nor Descartes before him was under any such illusions about the propositions they designated as *per se nota*. A *per se nota* proposition may well require argument for readers whose intellects are clouded by prejudice or who have not reflected carefully enough on what everyone knows by experience.

In addition to the examples given in the Glossary for Volume I, consider Spinoza's declaration in TP vii, 23, that the propositions he had advanced in TP vi, 32, about the proper treatment of resident aliens, are *per se nota*. These hardly have the same status as the axioms of Euclidean geometry. But if you think about them—bringing to bear what your experience has taught you about human nature—you should see

that they are true. They are properly taken as first principles, even if they may require argument for some unreflective people. Sometimes, to avoid the awkwardness of the literal translation, and to convey more clearly what I think the Latin means, I render this phrase “can be known without argument.”

For more, see FOUNDATION.

LANGUAGE

Lingua

LAUGHTER

Risus

LAW, RIGHT

lex, jus

Lex is easy for the translator, not so easy for the commentator. I translate *lex* uniformly as “law.” There’s no serious alternative. But as a commentator I observe that Spinoza begins TTP iv by defining “law” *in general* as a kind of regularity in nature, which may hold for each individual, or for all or some members of some kind. He recognizes two main species of law, distinguished by the cause of the regularity.

The first are scientific laws, which depend “on a necessity of nature.” In them the regularity follows from the nature or definition of the kind of thing covered by the law. Spinoza conceives this regularity to be necessary.² The second kind results from human decisions, the prescriptions of political agents or institutions. In the happiest cases these decisions would presumably reflect a collective judgment that it would be advantageous for everyone in the community if there were general adherence to a certain rule of conduct. But Spinoza

notes, ominously, that such laws may have other causes.

The main points in the preceding paragraph are made clearly enough in TTP iv, 1–4. Problems for the commentator arise, first, because Spinoza goes on to say (in iv, 5) that *lex* is commonly understood to be nothing but a command which men can either obey or disregard, that it seems to be used figuratively when it refers to scientific laws,³ and that it seems *lex* ought to be defined more particularly as a principle of living which man prescribes to himself or others for some end. If Spinoza were to adhere to this narrower definition, that would evidently limit the proper application of *lex* to laws of the second kind. But he doesn’t do that. He continues to apply the term *lex* to propositions which he must regard as laws of the first kind (most notably in TTP vi and xvi, 4). This encourages confusion about just what his preferred definition of law was.

ADN. XXXIV (at TTP xvi, 53) suggests that in a sense the first kind of law is more fundamental.⁴ If we properly understood the divine law, we would understand it as a matter of natural necessity, not as a command which might or might not be obeyed (iv, 25–36). Nevertheless, the common understanding of divine law is that it is a command issuing from a God who is conceived as a prince, whose commands we might or might not obey. And that’s the conception of divine law Spinoza seeks to refute in TTP iv, 23–37. So in TTP iv the focus is on the conception of law as divine command, even though that’s not the most satisfactory way to conceive of divine law.

2. I believe this is orthodox Cartesian philosophy of science. See my article on laws of nature in Descartes, in Nolan *Descartes Lexicon* 2016. Some Cartesian scholars interpret the doctrine of the creation of eternal truths as entailing that Descartes recognizes no necessary truths. In Curley 1984, I argued that they’re wrong.

3. TTP ADN. XXXIV suggests that Spinoza thinks it a philosophic usage to call the laws of nature laws.

4. To that extent I think I agree with Rutherford’s criticism of Curley 1991b in Rutherford 2010.

GLOSSARY-INDEX

My use of the term “legislation” in the translation of TTP v, 14, is my solution to the following problem: how do we express in English the claim Spinoza makes in TTP iv, 1, that *jus* is a more correct term for his second kind of law than *lex* is? We can’t use “law” without making the passage sound like nonsense. Different translators have found different solutions: Elwes and Wernham have “ordinance”; Shirley has “statute”; Silverthorne and Israel use “decree”; Yaffe has “right.” I’ve opted for “legislation,” a term I also use in TTP Pref., 22, where Spinoza writes that the *lex Mosis* (law of Moses) is nothing but the *jura* of the individual state of the Hebrews. The point there seems to be to deny that the Mosaic legislation was binding on anyone outside the geographic and temporal bounds of that state. Similarly in TTP i, 17; v, 16, 26.

For discussion of *jus* and related language (e.g., *jus et institutum naturae*), see below, under RIGHT.

LAYMAN

Idiota

Spinoza uses this term only once. “Ordinary person” would have been a plausible alternative. But when Steno replies, he seems to attach pejorative connotations to the term.

LEADER, TO LEAD

Dux, ducere

A *dux* is a leader in war. I favor “leader” or “commander” when it seems to me that “general” would imply too specific a rank, but sometimes “general” seems appropriate, and very occasionally, “duke.”

The related verb *ducere* occurs very frequently, and has quite a broad range of meanings. *Ductus* occurs quite frequently in phrases indicating that someone has been guided by reason, or by an affect. The indexing seeks to record all occurrences of *dux* and *ductus*, but only a representative selection of those of *ducere*,

ignoring various idioms in which *ducere* occurs.

LEARNED; LEARNING

Doctus, eruditio

LEISURE

Otium

LEVITE, TRIBE OF LEVI

Tribus Levi, Levita

Spinoza’s way of describing the role of the Levites glosses over controversies which were evidently important in biblical times, and are still unresolved. The passage bridging Exodus 27–28 designates Aaron and his sons (Levites by Exod. 6:16–25) as priests in perpetuity, with responsibilities which would have included consulting the Urim and Thummim to discern the will of God, offering sacrifices, and instructing the people in the law. (Cf. Exod. 28:30; Deut. 10:8–9, 18:1–8, 21:5, 31:9–13, 33:8–11.)

But who was a priest? Exodus 27–28 suggests: only Aaron and his descendants. Levites not descended from Aaron were hereditary temple officials, assigned to assist Aaron and his descendants—for example, by carrying the ark of the covenant, and preventing outsiders from coming near it—but not priests. We find this view also in Numbers 3:5–10, 25–26, 16:1–11, 18:1–7.

On a different view, any Levite was ipso facto a priest. (Cf. Deut. 18:1–8, 31:9–13, 33:8–11.) It appears that the conflicts in the texts arise at least partly from the fact that different sources had different views. The source biblical scholars designate as P (for “priestly”) restricts the priesthood to Aaron and his descendants. D (for “Deuteronomist”) makes all Levites priests. It’s possible also that the rights and responsibilities of the Levites were different at different periods. The above account is based partly on Kugel (313–14, 330–31) and partly on “Levites and Priests,” in the ABD, IV:297–310.

In any event, Spinoza's hostility toward the Levites in TTP xvii seems to be a proxy for his feelings toward the Calvinist clergy in the Dutch Republic.

LICENCE

Licentia

Licentia almost always has negative connotations: an immoderate, disorderly liberty. This is not true of the related verb *licet* and adjective *licitus*, which signify simply that something is permitted or possible.

LIFE

Vita

LIGHT OF NATURE, NATURAL LIGHT

Lumen naturale

LORD

Dominus

Dominus can mean "lord," in the sense of a human who is in a position to issue commands. It's also, in the correspondence, a common term of polite address, equivalent to our "mister," and a term used to refer to God (doing duty for YHWH) or Jesus. Occurrences of *dominus* which are equivalent to "mister" are not indexed.

LOVE, LOVING-KINDNESS

Amor, c(h)aritas

If *sive* indicates an equivalence, then Spinoza equates *charitas* with *amor erga proximum* at TTP xiv, 27. But perhaps this example is more evidence that *sive* does not always indicate an equivalence, and should be read in this context as making more precise the meaning of *charitas* in this context. (*Charitas* is said to be an attribute of God in TTP xiii, 20. Maybe it makes sense to attribute *amor erga homines* to God, but surely not *amor erga proximum*.) In any case, such contexts will be difficult to translate unless we make at least a verbal distinction between *amor* and *charitas*.

Spinoza uses *charitas* to translate חסד (*chesed*) at TTP xiii, 20, which is what suggested the possibility of using

"loving-kindness" for *charitas*. "Loving-kindness" was introduced into English by biblical translators seeking to convey the connotations of חסד, understood as a kindness arising from the steadfast love God is represented as displaying towards his people in the Hebrew Bible. Other translators (e.g., Shirley, Silverthorne/Israel) have often used "charity" for *charitas*, which is natural, but seems to me unfortunate, since it may suggest giving alms to the poor. *Charitas* does, of course, include aiding the poor, but it also includes defending justice, not killing people, not coveting their goods, and so forth. TTP xii, 37, is a crucial summary. TTP v, 4, illustrates nicely the influence on Spinoza of prophets like Isaiah, who put more emphasis on right conduct toward others than on the ceremonial requirements of the law. Similar is TTP xiii, 20–21, citing Jeremiah.

MAGISTRATE

magistratus

I use "magistrate" in its general sense ("any civil officer charged with the administration of the law . . . who may be the sovereign or any subordinate officer with executive power within the state" OED 1a), not in the narrower sense ("a civil officer exercising local judicial power" OED 1b), which has become more common.

MAJESTY

Majestas

Majestas generally refers to the person (or collective body) which has sovereignty, *sometimes, but by no means necessarily* a king. (Cf. III/228/7–10, where the estates of Holland are said to have always possessed the right of supreme *majestas*.) It is often used in conjunction with *summa*, in a way which seems roughly equivalent to *summa potestas* (e.g., at III/207/ 9, 239/13–14). But it seems to have connotations which *summa potestas* lacks. In classical Latin *majestas* suggested a certain dignity or grandeur, and those concepts are also associated

with its English cognate. Spinoza observes that the defenders of *majestas* seek to persuade people, by devious means, that *majestas* is sacred and God's representative on earth (TTP xvii, 24). Its defenders also claim (perhaps with greater justice) that the *majestas* of the state is the guardian of its *salus* (a term which is also ambiguous, but which in this context I translate by "safety"). At one stage I frequently used "authority" for *majestas*. But on reflection it seemed to me best to stick to "majesty" as consistently as possible, in order to preserve these connotations. (This is not possible, of course, in the common idiom *majestatem laedere*, to commit treason.)

MAN

Homo

"Man" in this translation needs to be understood to refer to human beings of either sex.

MARKINGS

Apex

The meaning of this infrequently used term is unclear but Spinoza seems to use it to cover both the vowel points (*puncta*) and the accent marks (*accentus*) which the Masoretes added to biblical Hebrew to indicate its proper pronunciation.

MEANING

Sensus, sententia

Generally "meaning" translates *sensus*. Only occasionally does it seem required for *sententia*.

MENTALITY

Ingenium

Ingenium is a difficult term, because it has a wide range of theoretically possible meanings, and occurs frequently, with apparently different meanings in different contexts. Classically it can mean any of the following: *natural disposition, temperament, mood, inherent quality or character, natural inclination or desire, mental powers, natural abilities, talent, intellect,*

mind, inspiration, cleverness, skill, and ingenuity. This list may not be exhaustive, but it should include all the live possibilities in Spinoza.

In fact, I think the range of possible meanings in Spinoza is narrower than that. Sometimes *ingenium* occurs in a sense in which it seems to mean *native ability* or *talent*. This occurs, for example, in the correspondence between Oldenburg and Spinoza, discussing what Kircher's work shows about his *ingenium*. Oldenburg contrasts Kircher's *ingenium* with Spinoza's. (See Letters 30 and 31.) Another example, I think, occurs in TP viii, 49. In these contexts I sometimes use "native ability," or "intelligence," and sometimes "talent"—the latter when I think the person's ability is implicitly being praised as being out of the ordinary. (Cf. TTP iii, 14.)

Sometimes *ingenium* seems to refer not so much to a natural ability, as to acquired knowledge or skill. Examples may be found at TTP i, 33, and ii, 31, where I have used "understanding."

The most interesting contexts are those in which *ingenium* seems to me to be best translated by "mentality," where I understand that term to mean *mental character* or *disposition*, or *the characteristic attitude of mind or way of thinking of a person, or social group* (following OED 3). It's important to understand that these ways of thinking include, not only opinions, but also passions and dispositions. (This seems to me clear in TTP Pref., §28.) The problem with the preachers whose authority Spinoza wishes to diminish (Letter 30) is that they want others to live according to their *ingenium*, i.e., not only to think as they do, but also to love what they love and hate what they hate. (Cf. E III P31C.) Spinoza, by contrast, would like everyone to be able to live *ex suo ingenio*—according to his own mentality (IV/166/18–19). Examples of this usage may be found, not only in Letter 30, but in TTP Pref., 12, 28, 29, and 30; ii, 17, 49; iii, 41.

TTP v, 27–28, illustrates nicely the complexity of *ingenium*. The problem Moses faced in ruling the Hebrew people after the exodus was twofold: the people were lacking intellectually, unable to see what was to their advantage; but they also had a stubborn streak which made it impossible to govern them by fear alone. Similarly, in TTP v, 7, Spinoza writes that experience has taught us to vary the penalty for lawbreaking according to the *ingenium* of the people for whom the laws are made. I think what underlies that recommendation is the idea that what penalties are appropriate will vary both with the cognitive abilities of the people and with their affective dispositions.

Moreau's discussion of the meaning of *ingenium* (Moreau 1994, part II, ch. 3) is very helpful. Although I predominantly use an English term which focuses on the mental aspect of *ingenium*, I agree with Moreau that the diversity of *ingenia* is rooted in the diversity of the dispositions of people's bodies, which are partially determined by their different biographies and environments.

MERCENARY SOLDIER
Miles auxiliaris

Machiavelli had made a distinction (*Prince* xii–xiii) between mercenaries and auxiliaries, the former being soldiers whom the state has hired, the latter being troops sent by another ruler for assistance, who owe their allegiance to the other ruler. Both mercenaries and auxiliaries are non-citizen soldiers, and both, Machiavelli thinks, are useless. Spinoza seems to ignore this distinction, using the term *miles auxiliaris* (in TP vii, 12 and 17) to refer to any non-citizen soldier, whether he is in the pay of the state for which he is supposedly working, or of another ruler.

MIND
Mens, animus

My default translation for *mens* is “mind.” But quite often, particularly in contexts where the interpretation of a text and the intention of its author are

at issue, though “mind” would be possible, “intention” or “meaning” seems more appropriate. TTP vii, 54, provides a good example of that usage. Sometimes I use “mind” for *animus*, which is discussed under “heart,” the more frequent translation.

MINISTER, PRIEST
Sacerdos

MIRACLE
Miraculum

Spinoza offers different definitions of miracles at different points in his argument. (For discussion, see Curley 1985.) His official definition permits him to grant that miracles occur, but raises questions about their religious significance: “a miracle is just a work whose natural cause we can't explain by the example of another familiar thing, or at least, which can't be so explained by the person who relates the miracle” (vi, 13). This reductive definition is at the heart of Oldenburg's complaint that Spinoza equates miracles with ignorance (Letter 74). If miracles are just events whose natural causes we can't explain, or which can't be explained by the person who recounts the story of the miracle, then whether an event is a miracle will depend on how much knowledge of nature the narrator of the miracle has. Miracles so understood don't support any particular religion, because they occur in many religions.

Oldenburg might have been happier with another definition Spinoza suggests: that a miracle is an event contrary to the universal laws of nature (vi, 9). But Spinoza thinks it's demonstrable that in *that* sense of the term, there are no miracles (vi, 7–12). The laws of nature are necessary truths. So nothing contrary to them can happen.

The concept of a miracle is closely connected with that of wonder. In classical Latin that connection dominates, and the idea of a violation of a law of nature is missing, though the idea of the event

being beyond the capacity of nature is not. See Forcellini, *Lexicon*.

MULTITUDE, MULTIPLICITY

Multitudo

In this volume I've undertaken to translate *multitudo* consistently by "multitude" in political contexts, and by "multiplicity" in mathematical or metaphysical contexts. Balibar 1985b/1989 illustrates the importance of translating *multitudo* as consistently as possible; IV/179 illustrates what I call the mathematical or metaphysical use of the term.

Even in political contexts, though, I think the term can have quite different meanings, which are not always easy to distinguish. Sometimes *multitudo* refers to a (large) subset of a society's population, but not the population as a whole. This group would not include the king or other members of the political elite,⁵ and is often viewed negatively by the person using this language, who may be a member of the elite, apt to think of the multitude as having limitations of intellect and character which make them subject to political manipulation. (Cf. OLD 5b.) *Multitudo* does not occur often in the TTP—only at III/6, 7, 10, 203, 225—but when it does, it seems always to have these negative connotations.

In the TP the situation is more complex. There a second usage becomes prominent, where *multitudo* refers, I think, not to a particular subset of the population, but simply to a large number of people, who may not yet be members of a political community, or who, if they do belong to a political community, may be *all* the members of that community. They may not be viewed any more negatively than people in general are viewed. (Cf. OLD 3, 4.) I take it that Spinoza's view in this work is that any large population, or large subset of a

population, must share the limitations of people in general, specifically, their tendency to be guided more by affects than by reason. This seems to me quite a common usage in the TP, e.g., in i, 3, 5; v, 6–7; viii, 12.

The broad sense of *multitudo* is not Spinoza's universal usage, even in the TP, though it is not always easy to distinguish between the two senses. The occurrences in vi, 8, vii, 2, vii, 11, and viii, 13 seem to me clear examples of the narrower sense, as is the final occurrence of "multitude" in v, 7. When I think the broad usage is in play, I normally use the indefinite rather than the definite article. A particularly clear example occurs at vii, 5, where the multitude in question is characterized as "a whole multitude." On the other hand, in TP ii, 17, where I think both uses occur, Spinoza modifies the second occurrence by the adjective *communis*, which I take to mean that he's thinking of the *multitudo* referred to there as a large subset of the population.

In TP ii, 21, I think *multitudo* has the broad sense. A large group of people, not yet organized into a state, is thought of as being candidates for formation into a political community. Note how differently this passage reads if a definite article is substituted for the indefinite article I have chosen. This passage introduces the important idea that a *multitudo* might be led *una veluti mente*, "as if by one mind." When the latter language first occurred, a few paragraphs earlier (in TP ii, 16), it was clearly a whole population which was in question. Other instances of the broader sense, in my view, occur at iii, 2 and 7; iv, 6; vi, 1; and vii, 25. I do not attempt to adjudicate all uses, but leave this to the reader.

MUTILATED

Truncatus

5. By "elite" here and elsewhere I mean any members of the class from which the rulers are drawn in a monarchy or aristocracy, whether they are actually rulers or not. Though Spinoza himself is hardly a member of the elite, even in this broad sense, he sometimes seems to adopt their point of view.

In the context of biblical criticism this term typically refers to a passage where part of the text has inadvertently been omitted. Cf. TTP ix, 20–21, 32.

NAME

Nomen

NARRATION, NARRATIVE

Narratio

See HISTORY

NATION

Natio, gens

NATURAL LIGHT

Lumen naturale

The natural light (of reason) is opposed to the supernatural light (of revelation). Cf. TTP iv, 48. So what we can know by the natural light is what we can know without relying on the authority of Scripture. This is not (as some seem to think) to be equated with what we can know by purely *a priori*, deductive means. It includes also what we can know by ordinary empirical means. When Solomon is praised for having surpassed the wise men of his age in the natural light (in TTP iv, 40), he is not being praised for his deductive prowess, but for having learned certain things from experience, without reliance on revelation. See also TTP v, 34–36; vii, 70.

NATURE

Natura

Natura seems to me multiply ambiguous in Spinoza. In addition to being (in some uses) equivalent to *essentia*, sometimes it refers to *Natura naturans* (the most fundamental explanatory principles in nature, E I P29S), sometimes to *natura naturata* (the totality of things explained by those principles, *ibid.*), and sometimes to both of these at once.

NECESSITAS

Necessity

In my view many discussions of Spinoza's necessitarianism—i.e., his doctrine that there is nothing contingent in nature (E I P29), or that God could

have produced things in no other way, and no other order than he did (E I P33)—attribute to him a stronger view than he actually held, because they fail to give proper weight to his doctrine that things may be necessary either by reason of their essence or by reason of their cause (E I P33S). I would say: on Spinoza's view, some things are absolutely necessary (true in virtue of the essence of the thing in question), others are only relatively necessary (true in relation to their cause, which will not, in general, be something absolutely necessary).

NEIGHBOR

Proximus

Equated with *conciuis* at TTP xvii, 86.

OBEDIENCE

Obedientia, obsequium, obtemperantia

In a political context (TTP v, 25) Spinoza defines *obedientia* as carrying out a command solely on the authority of the person issuing the command. In a religious context (TTP xiii, 8) he defines *obedientia erga Deum* as love of one's neighbor (appealing to Rom. 13:8). The latter definition seems to be assumed at TTP xiv, 27.

I believe Spinoza regards *obsequium* and *obtemperantia* as synonyms for *obedientia*. This seems to me true in spite of the fact that at TP ii, 19–20, he offers two definitions of *obsequium* which are *prima facie* different from one another, and from the definitions of *obedientia* in the TTP: that it is a constant will to do what is good according to the law, and what, by the common decision, ought to be done; and that it is a constant will to moderate the appetites according to the prescription of reason. He suggests some reservations about the second of these definitions, but in ii, 21, seems to accept it for persons living in (well-ordered) states.

In spite of the variations in these definitions, Spinoza's general usage of *obedientia* and *obsequium* has inclined me to use "obedience" at TP ii, 19–20 and

in most passages in the political works. The only exception I'm aware of is a passage in the TP (vii, 17) *obsequium* seemed to require "indulgence."

OBJECT; OBJECTIVELY

Ideatum; objective

As in Volume I, *ideatum* is a technical term referring to the object of thought. In this volume, IV/173–74 is a particularly instructive passage. When Spinoza says that our mind contains the nature of God *objective*, he means that our mind has God's nature as its object, and thus contains a representation of God's nature. The usage is scholastic in origin, but still alive in Descartes' Third Meditation.

OBSTINACY, STUBBORNNESS

Contumacia

I think the sense is generally: willful disobedience to legitimate authority. Cf. Spinoza's definition of faith in TTP xiv, 22, where *contumacia* is treated as a factor showing a person's faith to be impious.

ODIUM

Hate

ONE'S OWN MASTER

Sui juris

Spinoza defines being *sui juris* at TP ii, 9: a person is *sui juris* "insofar as he can fend off every force, avenge an injury done to him according to his own opinion, and absolutely, insofar as he can live according to his own mentality" (III/280/1–5). He is *alterius juris*, under someone else's control, if that person has 'power (*potestas*) over him.

The language goes back to Justinian's *Institutiones* I, vi, where slaves, children, and grandchildren are the principal examples of people who are under someone else's control. (If a woman is the head of a household, she is also *sui juris*.) But as a concept in Roman law, being *alterius juris* implies that the control is rightful and will be enforced by the law. In Spinoza's philosophy, it

does not appear that it has similar moral implications. Cf. the explanation of the conditions under which one person has another in his power in TP ii, 10. Note, though, the conclusion drawn in TP ii, 11, that being fully one's own master requires using reason rightly.

There is no comparable definition of *sui juris* in the TTP, but the usage there seems consistent with the definition in the TP. An individual who is *sui juris* is able to act as he pleases (TTP v, 30). His actions depend on no one's decision but his own (xvii, 4). The notions of acting *ex suo jure* (TTP xvii, 7) and being the master of something *maximo naturae jure* (TTP xx, 8) seem to be equivalent.

OPINION

Sententia

Generally "opinion" works well for *sententia* (as "think" is almost invariably my translation of the related verb *sentire*). But in that section of TTP vii where Spinoza discusses the interpretation of language which may be ambiguous or obscure (§§16–24), "sentence" seemed required.

OPPONENT

Adversarius

ORDER

Ordo

It is characteristic of Spinoza to say that he does not attribute order to nature, e.g., at IV/170/7–11, provoking Oldenburg to point out that there is a sense in which he does do that (IV/176/26–177/6). Perhaps the order he rejects is one which presupposes teleology, and the order he accepts is one which does not. Cf. E I App., II/81/25ff.

ORDINARY PERSON (pl. PEOPLE)

Plebs

In Roman politics the *plebs* were members of the general citizenry (as distinct from the patricians), who gained political representation in the fifth century B.C.E. through their tribunes (who were given veto power over the election of senior magistrates), and later through

GLOSSARY

a legislative council. Over time plebeians became eligible for important political offices: the senate, the consulship, the censorship, and the dictatorship.

In the TTP Spinoza generally seems to use *plebs* simply to refer to ordinary people, without reference to any particular political class, and without strongly negative connotations. The *plebs* form the greatest part of the human race (III/77). They do not include the learned, and their powers of understanding are limited by comparison with those of the learned. They are most receptive to arguments from experience. In that work *plebs* seems to be used interchangeably with *vulgus*, and I normally translate it by language very similar to the language I standardly use for *vulgus* ("common people"). Occasionally (mostly in TTP xviii) I have thought it necessary to translate *plebs* by "the mob."

In the TP, on the other hand, *plebs* does not occur before vii, 27, where it definitely does refer to the class opposed to the patricians in Roman politics, and where Spinoza defends the plebeians against the kinds of criticism found in Roman historians. He acknowledges that they have their weaknesses, but thinks they are not worse than those of people in general, and seems, in some respects, to view them more favorably than the patricians. In that passage, I use "plebeian" for *plebs*. Subsequent uses in the TP occur in discussions of various forms of aristocracy, and seem to refer to a class opposed to the aristocrats, and analogous to the plebeians of ancient Rome.

ORGANIZED COMMUNITY

Politia

Politia was used classically to translate the Greek *politeia*, the name in Greek of the work we know as Plato's *Republic*. This makes no sense in either of the two contexts in which this term occurs in Spinoza (TTP v, 20, and ADN. XVI at ix, 17). Glazemaker's translation of the first passage—*staatkunde* (i.e., statecraft

or statesmanship)—also seems not to fit the contexts. The post-classical dictionaries in the DLD also seem not to offer anything suitable. "Organized community," on the other hand, seems to fit both contexts.

OUTCOME

Casus, eventus, successus

PARTICULAR, SPECIAL, SINGULAR

Singularis

PATRICIAN

Patricius

When Spinoza introduces this term into his political theory, he does not give it the meaning we might have expected it to have. In principle the whole people might be members of the patrician class, so long as they were chosen for that role and did not acquire it by a kind of innate right or fortune. Cf. TP viii, 1. Also, the patricians are not to be identified with the rich; there will be rich people who are not patricians. (Cf. TP viii, 37.)

PEACE

Pax, tranquillitas

PEACE OF MIND, SATISFACTION

Acquiescentia, tranquillitas animi

PEOPLE

Populus, gens

Populus is used mainly in the TTP, where it generally refers to the people of Israel (sometimes, but not always, clearly distinguished from their leaders). Sometimes it refers to the members of a generic political community.

PERCEIVE, PERCEPTION

Percipere, perceptio

Percipere needs to be understood quite broadly. Sometimes Spinoza will speak of perceiving things through or with the aid of the imagination (TTP i, 43, 45; ii, 14). Sometimes he clearly thinks of *perceptio* as a function of the intellect (i, 4; iv, 28, 31; vii, 66). Of particular importance is the discussion in TTP vii, 66–69, with its attendant annotation, ADN. VIII. I

take it that the perceptible are the things we can grasp easily, the imperceptible are those which it is impossible to grasp.

PHARISEE

Phariseus

Gebhardt observes (V, 26–27) that Spinoza uses *Phariseus* in two senses: first, and most commonly, to refer to a religious party in ancient Israel, who were opposed to the Sadducees; and second, to refer to Jews who adhered to what subsequently became the dominant Jewish tradition, down to his own day. An example of the first usage would occur in TTP xviii, 24; of the second, in TTP iii, 40 (or IV/321). In x, 43–45, Spinoza ascribes the selection of the canon of the Hebrew Bible to the Pharisees, and treats them as the authors of the Talmud. At TTP xv, 4, Spinoza counts Maimonides as a Pharisee, which may not fit easily under either of these categories.

PHILOSOPHER

Philosophus

It's important to bear in mind that *philosophus* and related terms have a broader meaning in the seventeenth century than their English cognates do today. So at TTP ii, 26, philosophizing correctly includes having an accurate knowledge of basic astronomy. At TTP vi, 54, philosophers are said to have written histories of nature. And the freedom of philosophizing which Spinoza argues for at the end of TTP xiv, and again in TTP xx, is not limited to the kinds of inquiries which take place in philosophy departments today.

PIETY

Pietas

Generally I render *pietas* and related terms by their English cognates (a departure from my policy in Volume I, where *pietas* was generally rendered either by “morality” or “duty”). I don't think there's any good solution to the problems *pietas* presents. Readers need to understand that *pietas* has a broader connotation than *piety*.

As in classical Latin, so in Spinoza: *pietas* entails an attitude of dutiful respect toward those to whom a person is bound by ties of religion, consanguinity, or nationality. It can apply both to a person's attitude toward the gods *and* to the feeling of the gods toward human beings. If we think of God as bound to humans (or to his elect) by various covenants, it will not be strange to speak, as Spinoza sometimes does, of his *pietas*. He also speaks of piety toward one's fellow men or one's country (e.g., at III/244/6–7).

Given the TTP's goal of persuading educated Christians that allowing religious liberty is not necessarily harmful to their religion, emphasizing the religious connotations of *pietas* seems particularly appropriate here. Perhaps, if I were to revise Volume I, I might bring it into line with Volume II. But I would still need a Glossary entry to explain why this might be misleading.

PLAN, ADVICE

Consilium

Consilium is highly ambiguous, and overlaps in meaning with *concilium*, which, however, does not have as wide a range of meanings.

PLEASE

Placere

POLITICAL PRACTITIONER, POLITICS

Politicus, politica

There is no happy choice for *politicus*. Wernham and Shirley both opted for “statesman,” which doesn't easily fit contexts where Spinoza says *politici* have a reputation for cunning and the pursuit of private or partisan interests (TP i, 2). “Politician” has those negative connotations, but our politics being what it is, fails to suggest the positive characteristics Spinoza attributes to *politici*: a deep understanding of public affairs, grounded in personal experience and a knowledge of history, and a concern for the interests of the whole community. I've opted for “political

practitioner,” which is unhappily cumbersome, and not self-explanatory. I intend this Glossary entry to stipulate a meaning for this phrase, as used in this translation.

Spinoza’s model is Machiavelli, who he thinks knew a great deal about human nature and public affairs, was wise in his judgments, and cared deeply about the city he worked for. (Cf. TP v, 7.) He knows why Machiavelli acquired his bad reputation, but judges him charitably. This evaluation reflects partly his general attitude toward human shortcomings (a sadness that traits so common and harmful should be so difficult to eliminate, combined with a determination to understand them and profit by the knowledge), partly his position on natural law (which makes it hard for him to condemn a political actor who dedicates himself unflinchingly to the good of his country), and partly his appreciation of the difficulty of keeping one’s hands clean in politics. To understand how Spinoza could regard Machiavelli as a model political thinker, it’s necessary not to regard him as the Prince of Darkness. One might begin by reading David Wootton’s introduction to his edition of Machiavelli’s political writings or Isaiah Berlin’s “The Originality of Machiavelli,” in Berlin 1997.

POWER, 'POWER
Potentia, potestas

In classical Latin *potentia* typically refers to an ability to do something, which may be possessed either by animate or by inanimate things. Among these abilities would be the power a person or group of people has to exercise control over others, or to influence them. But *potentia* is not limited to that kind of power, and its use carries no implication that the power has any claim to legitimacy. So far as I can see, Spinoza’s usage of *potentia* is entirely consistent with this. So I

translate *potentia* by “power” without hesitation or qualm. (I note in passing that “power” is also a very common translation of *vis*.)

Potestas is another matter. The typical Latin usage of *potestas* is different, in that it very often (not always) refers to power arising in an institutional context from a person’s (or collective body’s) position in that institution. It’s often the power a political or military or religious leader has to control or command others. It’s also used for the power a father has over his children, or a master over his slaves. Spinoza’s usage seems to conform to this pattern, insofar as he very often (not invariably) uses *potestas* to refer to the kind of power which might be thought to have a kind of legitimacy arising from an institution people have created. This seems to be the case, for example, in TP iii, 3 and 8. Ramond’s notes to these passages are quite helpful. But there are also passages where Spinoza apparently uses *potestas* as if it were nothing but a synonym for *potentia*, and did not have any moral connotations. Clear cases occur, I think, in TP ii, 6–10. See also III/280/30.

The absence of moral connotations in the ordinary Latin usage of *potentia* is part of what makes Spinoza’s doctrine that a thing’s right of nature extends as far as its power does—*jus naturae eo usque se extendere quo usque ejus potentia se extendit* (TTP xvi, 3)—disturbing to those who would like to distinguish between might and right. Throughout TTP xvi, 3–4, the Latin translated by “power” is *potentia*. There’s a similar equation of power with right later in that chapter, when Spinoza writes that “everyone had to contract to obey the supreme ‘power [*summa potestas*] in everything, either tacitly or explicitly, when they transferred to it all their power [*potentiam*] to defend themselves, i.e., all their right [*jus*]” (TTP xvi, 26).

Making some distinction between *potentia* and *potestas* seems particularly desirable in contexts where both terms are present. An example is TTP xvii, 11, which reads: *quanquam hac ratione jus et potestatem imperii satis amplam concipimus, nunquam tamen fiet ut ullum adeo magnum detur ut ii qui id tenent potentiam absolute ad omnia quae velint habeant*, which I translate as “in this way we conceive the right and ‘power of the state to be ample enough. Still, it will never be so great that those who hold it have an absolute power to do whatever they wish.” I take this to mean that no matter how great the state’s *de jure* power—and the constitutional arrangements outlined in TTP xvi put no limits on its *de jure* power—its *de facto* power will always be limited.

There are some cases where *potestas* refers to what is more naturally thought of as a right which some individual has against other individuals. So when Spinoza speaks of the *potestas se defendendi* which each person has (e.g., in TTP Pref., 30–31), I translate that as a “right of self-defense.” (This is consistent with classical usage, where “right” is a possible translation of *potestas*, but not of *potentia*.)

When you read “supreme ‘power(s)” in the translation, the Latin is invariably *summa potestas* (or *summae potestates*), a phrase commonly used by seventeenth-century political theorists to refer to the holder(s) of sovereign power. The *summa potestas* is the ultimate ruler in the sense that the institutional arrangements do not provide any way within the institution of challenging the decisions of that person (or collective body). See below, on SOVEREIGN(TY). The claim to legitimacy which these powers have might not be a very good one, in the opinion of outsiders. But the presumption is that it’s generally accepted in the institution within which it arises.

“Power,” in this sense, has a certain moral weight.

There is a significant school of Spinoza interpretation which attaches great importance to the distinction between *potentia* and *potestas*. (See, e.g., Negri, 1981, 1982; Negri/Hardt, 1991; Deleuze 1981/2001) Unfortunately I don’t understand what these interpreters mean by the distinction they draw. So I can’t say whether I think they’re right to think that Spinoza systematically makes the same distinction. In any case, it’s not clear how we might conveniently represent that distinction in English if he did make it. Negri’s English-language translator comments that the question of how to translate the two terms is “intractable,” and resorts to distinguishing the two sense of “power” by capitalizing the English term when it translates *potestas* and leaving it uncapitalized when it translates *potentia*. My policy of attempting to reproduce the capitalization of the seventeenth-century editions precludes that solution. But I use a modification of it, distinguishing occasions when “power” translates *potestas* by prefixing a prime symbol, thus: ‘power. This should at least make it easier for readers to decide what they think about Spinoza’s usage of these terms.

There are certain phrases in which *potestas* commonly occurs—in *sua potestate*, or *sub potestate*. In these cases there does not seem to be any suggestion that the power arises from any institutional arrangements, or has any moral weight. This is particularly clear where being under someone’s *potestas* is defined at TP ii, 10.

POWER OF UNDERSTANDING

Captus

PRACTICE

Praxis

Equated with *experientia* at III/274. This term occurs mainly in the TP.

GLOSSARY

PRAYER

Precatio

PREACH

Praedicare

Generally *praedicare* means “to preach” or “proclaim” or “teach.” Rarely does it mean to predicate something of a subject, but this usage does occur in TTP xii, 19 and Letter 42 (at IV/210/16).

PRECARIOUS[LY]

Precario

The ambiguity of *precario* makes its translation difficult. Spinoza is much concerned about rulers who must rule *precario* (as in TTP xvi, 24; xvii, 107, 108, 110; TP vi, 5; viii, 3). Generally I have translated this as ruling “by entreaty,” or “at someone else’s pleasure.” But in many of these contexts it is quite tempting, and perhaps equally correct, to use the English cognate, reflecting the fact that a ruler has an uncertain power if his ability to have his commands obeyed depends on the voluntary cooperation of others. It’s a further point, of considerable importance to Spinoza’s political theory, that since every ruler depends, in some degree, on the voluntary cooperation of others, every ruler’s power is to some degree shaky. Spinoza is particularly concerned about the existence within a society of an alternative source of authority, competing with the authority of the ruler, as the Hebrew prophets often did.

PREJUDICE

Praejudicium

In TTP ii, 24, *praejudicium* is equated with an *opinio praeconcepta*, occurrences of which are indexed under *opinio*.

PRESCRIPTION

Praescriptum

PRESERVE

Conservatio

PRETEXT, GUISE

See SPECIES

PRIEST⁶

Pontifex, sacerdos

Sometimes Spinoza modifies *pontifex* with the adjective *summus* to refer to a high priest (usually the high priest of the Jews, though it might be the high priest of any religion whose priesthood has a hierarchical structure); sometimes *pontifex* has that connotation even without the modifier. And sometimes it seems to be just a general term for a priest of any sort.

When *pontifex* occurs in the same context as *sacerdos*, I believe Spinoza intends to make a distinction between the high priest (*pontifex*) and an ordinary priest (*sacerdos*). And wherever a hierarchy of priests is implied, with one priest having ultimate authority, *pontifex* will be the term for that priest. When I think Spinoza intends *pontifex* to refer to the pope, I use “pontiff.” When I think he means any priest with ultimate authority in religious matters, “high priest.”

Where the reference is clearly to the high priest of the Jews, I index the term separately from the general index for *pontifex*, even if that qualification is not explicit.

PROFIT

Lucrum

PROMISE

Promissio, promittere; polliceri

Spinoza equates a promise with a transfer of right at III/205/28. *Promittere* is the verb Spinoza most commonly uses for promising, and occurs frequently in the TTP. It does not often occur in the TP, where Spinoza is more apt to use *polliceri*. Sometimes *fides* has the sense of a promise which has been given (e.g., in TP ii, 12). When it does, I have generally translated it by “assurance.”

6. Prior to reading this entry, readers should consult the entry on LEVITES, which it presupposes.

GLOSSARY-INDEX

PROPER (SENSE)

Genuinus sensus

The “proper” sense seems to be the primary sense, from which other uses may be derived. Cf. TTP i, 26.

PROPERTY (PECULIAR)

Proprium

I use the phrase “peculiar property” to translate *proprium*, which in traditional logic is a very special kind of property, one which all and only members of the species possess, without its constituting the essence of the species. (The traditional example is *capacity for laughter* in the species *man*.) We don’t have very many occurrences of this term in Spinoza, so it’s difficult to be sure that he intends to use it in the traditional way. Cf. TP ii, 5, where the usage does not seem traditional. Uses where *proprium* is translated “own” will generally not be indexed as having little philosophic interest in their own right.

PROTEST

Reclamare

TTP xv, 10, seems to show that Spinoza thinks that if your reason protests against a proposition, in your mind you deny it, whatever your lips may say. Cf. E II P49S.

PROVE

confirmare, comprobare

I’ve come to think that in the TTP at least Spinoza uses *confirmare* and *comprobare* pretty much synonymously and that “prove” is often the best translation for them, though Spinoza tends to use them in contexts where there is an appeal to experience or scriptural authority, and the “proof” is strong, but not rigorously demonstrative (i.e., does not establish its conclusion with mathematical certainty). An important context is TTP v, 35–39, where he uses both terms. See also v, 3. TTP viii, 46, and xii, 4, are interesting contexts, where *confirmare* seems to mean “strengthen the authority of.” Sometimes

“confirm” does seem right for *confirmare* (e.g., at xvii, 103).

Spinoza also frequently uses *ostendere*, here translated “to show,” in such contexts.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Respublica, negotium publicum, commune, imperii

In the TTP and the correspondence, I normally translate *respublica* by “republic.” On the implications of that translation, see below, at REPUBLIC.

The situation in the TP is more complicated. Spinoza gives us an official definition of *respublica* in TP iii, 1, where “public affairs” seems the most suitable translation. This translation seems to work in some earlier passages of that work (e.g., TP ii, 17), and in some, but not all, of the later chapters (e.g., “public affairs” works in iii, 10; iv, 2, 3; v, 1; and vi, 18, but not in viii, 3, or xi, 1–2). The Pléiade editors thought the change with respect to the use of this term “one of the most notable evolutions observed in Spinoza’s vocabulary between the TTP and the TP” (p. 1490). But it seems that if Spinoza intended to use this term in a new sense, he did not consistently carry out that intention.

In the TTP Spinoza had used somewhat different language to express what seems to be the same concept: *negotium publicum*, or *commune*, or *negotia imperii* (translated “public business” or “affairs of state”). This language occurred too infrequently to make the index, but examples can be found at III/197, 222, 223, 225, 233. It’s not common in the TP, but not entirely absent.

PUBLISH

Edere, vulgare

Although *edere* and *vulgare* often mean “publish” in the sense in which we would use that term, it sometimes refers to an informal type of publication which might better be called “circulation.” When Spinoza says that the books of the New Testament were first “made available”

GLOSSARY

in languages other than Hebrew (TTP vii, 15), the process was not publication in the sense that term has now.

PUNISHMENT

Supplicium

RABBI

Rabinus

See Gebhardt V, 16, for useful comment on this term.

READING, TO READ

Lectio, legere

“Reading” is my default translation for *lectio*. Both the Latin and the English are ambiguous, between a non-technical sense in which it refers simply to the act of reading a text (exemplified at TTP iv, 19; v, 44) and a technical sense in which it refers to “the form in which a given passage appears in a copy or edition of a text” (OED 6, exemplified at TTP vii, 23, 58, 63, 67). In some occurrences of the technical sense of *lectio* it has seemed better to translate by “version.”

REASON

Ratio

Ratio is a term which resists simple treatment. Principally it is used to refer either to a faculty of the mind, or to a ground offered for believing or doing something, or to an argument. Spinoza’s commitment to reason is nicely expressed in TTP xv, 23, where he writes that “reason . . . is really the light of the mind, without which it sees nothing but dreams and inventions.” For a caution about understanding Spinoza’s commitment to reason, see the entries on EXPERIENCE, FOUNDATION, and HISTORY OF NATURE.

Ratio sometimes is equivalent to *natura*, in the sense of the essence of a thing. TTP viii, 23, is a passage illustrating this. It also has a non-technical use in which it might be translated *manner* or *way*; occurrences in this sense will not be indexed unless as part of a phrase which seems important in its own right.

REBELLION, REBELLIOUS

Seditio, seditiosus

My default translation for *seditio* and its cognates is “rebellion.” I take it that in modern English usage “sedition” has more strongly negative connotations, as involving some degree of disloyalty. Sometimes this seems warranted (e.g., in TTP xix, 35; xx, 36). But for the most part “rebellious” seems sufficient.

RECORD OF FACT

Narratio

See HISTORY

RELIGION

religio

What distinction does Spinoza make between religion and superstition? He clearly wants to make a distinction between these phenomena which is not relative to the speaker or the context—as it is in Hobbes. (Cf. *Leviathan* vi, 36; xi, 26.) In Letter 73 Spinoza says that the chief difference between religion and superstition is that religion has wisdom as its foundation, whereas superstition has ignorance as its foundation (IV/308a–309a). But he treats belief in miracles as superstitious, and would probably regard as superstitious attempts to avert disaster through prayer and sacrifice (TTP Pref., 3), and the belief that seers can foretell the future (TTP Pref., 5–6). If this is right, much of what we normally classify as ordinary religious practice, Spinoza would regard as superstition. In his reply to Albert Burgh Spinoza calls Catholicism a form of superstition, and attributes the persistence of Judaism to the effectiveness of its superstition (IV/321a–323a). I believe he would regard as superstitious any belief in an invisible, intelligent, powerful, supernatural agent who can be influenced by prayer, sacrifice, and other forms of religious ritual.

REPEAL

abrogare

Where *abrogare* refers to the action of a government, as it usually does, “repeal”

GLOSSARY-INDEX

seems right. In some contexts it refers to the action of a citizen, in which case “disregard” is more appropriate.

REPRESENTATIVE, DEPUTY

Vicarius

REPUBLIC

Respublica (or *res publica*)

“Republic” is my standard translation for *respublica* in the TTP. My intention in adopting it is simply to signal the presence of a (potentially theory-laden) term which, it often appears, might equally well be translated “state.” But I try to reserve “state” for *imperium* as much as possible. It often occurs in the same context, and I would like readers to be aware when Spinoza is using *respublica* rather than *imperium*. These indications of Spinoza’s usage are intended to help English readers work out their own theory of that usage.

There’s a use of the term “republic” in political theory which Russell Hanson crisply summarized when he wrote that

the hallmark of republican politics is the subordination of different interests to the common weal, or what is in the interest of all citizens. To ensure this outcome, government in a republic can never be the exclusive preserve of one interest or social order; it must always be controlled jointly by representatives of all major groups in a society. (“Republic,” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*)

In some contexts it does appear that Spinoza intends to use *respublica* to designate a state in which particular interests are subordinated to the common interest. See particularly TTP xvi, 34–37. But I’ve been unable to find any context where he uses *respublica* to classify a state as having the kind of power-sharing which Hanson associates with the term (and which historians generally associate with the paradigm of all republics, pre-imperial Rome).

Moreover, Spinoza does use *respublica* in TTP v, 15, to refer to Egypt under the Pharaoh, and in xvii, 18, to refer to the Roman state after it succumbed to what was effectively one-man rule, even if republican forms were retained. The use of “republic” thus runs some risk of being misleading. But it seemed best to run that risk, in order to give a better sense of Spinoza’s usage.

TTP v, 15, seems to be a good context to show that *respublica* and *imperium* are sometimes treated as rough synonyms. I think this is quite common, though not always so clear. (Cf. Totaro’s comment, Totaro 2007, 499n1.) That *respublica* and *imperium* are no more than rough synonyms is clear from the fact that *imperium* has a wider range of possible meanings. *Respublica* is never used in a way which would invite translation by the terms “authority” or “command” or “sovereignty.”

In the TP *respublica* often requires a different treatment. See the official definition in iii, 1, where Spinoza defines several of the terms he uses in his political theory. There he gives *respublica* a special sense, where it clearly does not designate either a state in general or a special kind of state, but an aspect of any state, its common activities, as directed by the sovereign. See PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

REPUTATION

Fama

RESPONSIBILITY

Cura

See CARE

RESTRAIN, LIMIT

Coercere

REVELATION

Revelatio

I believe the phrase *Prophetia sive Revelatio* in TTP i, 1, should be taken as marking a genuine equivalence, with the consequence that whatever uncertainty attends prophecy also attends revelation.

REVERE

See WORSHIP

REWARD, COMPENSATION

Praemium

RIGHT

Jus

Jus presents harder problems for the translator than *lex* does. Classically it's ambiguous between "law" and "right," the former understood (roughly) as a kind of command, the latter understood (roughly, again) as a kind of permission. Cf. *Leviathan* xiv, 3, where Hobbes criticizes legal theorists for confusing *jus* and *lex*, which "ought to be distinguished, because 'right' [*jus*] consisteth in a liberty to do or to forbear, whereas 'law' [*lex*] determineth and bindeth to one of them." The ambiguity Hobbes complains of is deeply embedded in classical usage.⁷ It is often difficult to decide which sense is in play.

The translator's life would be easier if Spinoza consistently used *jus* and *lex* in the way Hobbes recommended. And often Spinoza does use *jus* in the sense of a right, a principle permitting a certain kind of action. A good example occurs in TTP xvi, 2, where he writes that "it is by the supreme right [*jus*] of nature that fish are masters of the water, and that the large ones eat the smaller." But he is not consistent about this. Often he uses *jus* in what must be a prescriptive sense, as when he writes that before the exodus the Jews "had no laws [*leges*] peculiar to themselves, and were not bound by any law [*lex* is presumably understood], except natural law [*jus naturale*], and,

no doubt, the legislation [*jure*] of the Republic in which they were living (insofar as it was not contrary to divine natural law [*legi divinae naturali*])" (TTP v, 14). In general, when it seems to me that Spinoza is talking about a permissive principle, I translate *jus* as "right." When it seems to me that he is talking about a principle which binds people to act in a certain way, I translate *jus* as "law." Translators sometimes try to accommodate the ambiguity of *jus* by giving it a double translation. The NS translator does this at III/308/11, when he renders *jura* by *rechten en wetten*. I follow him there, but in general don't like this practice.

Though I've translated TTP v, 14, in the way which seems to me best, the whole idea of a *jus naturale*—that is, of a prescriptive law, which might bind the people who are subject to it, but which would be independent of any human legislative body—seems very problematic in Spinoza. The account of natural right he develops in TTP xvi, 2–11 says clearly that each individual has a natural right to do whatever it can do, that it's only in virtue of our being members of a political community that we can be said to be bound or obliged to do anything.

I find Spinoza's argument for this claim in TTP xvi unsatisfactory,⁸ but I take TTP iv, where Spinoza argues that God cannot be conceived as a law-giver, to provide a better argument. It's common in early modern natural law theory to think of natural law as a divine command, and Hobbes had argued that

7. The root of the problem may be that in many contexts both senses of *jus* will be implied. E.g., when Spinoza says in TTP Pref., §32 that the sovereign is the defender and interpreter of *jus civilis*, I presume he is referring to what we would call "civil law," understanding that as "the law of any city or state regulating the private rights and duties of the inhabitants" (OED). But as the OED definition suggests, a decision about the laws of the state often entails a decision about the rights of its citizens (on the principle that what the legal system does not explicitly prohibit, it implicitly permits). The close connection between the two concepts may explain Spinoza's use of the expression *leges, seu jura fundamentalia* in TP viii, 9.

8. See Curley 1996.

the only way we can properly conceive the laws of nature as laws is to think of them as divine commands.⁹ Spinoza argues in TTP iv, 23–37 that God cannot be conceived as someone who creates law by issuing commands. So it's hard to know what the term *jus naturale* might mean for Spinoza—at least if *jus naturale* is defined as a natural prescriptive law. Nevertheless, that notion is clearly in the text and the translation should reflect this. An interesting case occurs in TTP xvi, 18.

Though *jus* can mean “law” in Spinoza, I think that usually it means “right.” I take it that Spinoza conceives of natural rights in much the way Hobbes does, as entailing that their possessor is permitted to do or have something, without excluding others from an equal (or perhaps greater) right to do or have that thing. So if, in the state of nature, I see food which I take to be necessary for my self-preservation, I have a natural right to use it. But so do you, if you are similarly situated. We should not think that anyone has *given* us this permission or that anyone has a duty to see that we can exercise that right. It's just the case that no one has any exclusive right to use it. In the end our respective “rights” will be determined by our comparative power.

I've translated the phrase *jus et institutum naturae* by “the right and established practice of nature.” This phrase doesn't occur often, but the contexts where it does occur are important (most notably, TTP xvi, 2). “Established practice,” though sanctioned by the OLD, and as good as any other option I can think of, is not ideal. Spinoza seems to understand this language as referring to the way things necessarily act, in accordance with their nature. So it's an “established practice” in nature that the large fish eat the smaller. We should not imagine

that this “practice” comes from a decision anybody had any choice about. This is just the way things are—necessarily. And because things are necessarily that way, there can be no moral objection to their being that way. A context which I think supports this interpretation is TTP xvi, 19.

RIGHT

Fas

Fas and *nefas* refer primarily to what is considered right (permissible) or not according to divine law, though classically they can refer to acts in accordance with or contrary to the moral law. I think Spinoza tends to use these terms in their primary sense, but it is not always easy to tell.

RIVAL

Aemulus

RULE

Regula, imperium, dominus, princeps, rex

RULER

Princeps, imperator, rector

SADNESS

Tristitia

SALVATION, WELL-BEING, SAFETY

Salus

SCIENCE

Scientia

Scientia and its cognates occur quite frequently and often in contexts where it seems to me that the obvious translation, “science,” is going to be misleading. See the entry KNOWLEDGE.

scientia naturalis [= cognitio naturalis]

natural science

III/16, 23, 68, 81

scientia vera [= explicatio per primas causas]

true science

III/29, 30

9. See *Leviathan* xv, 41. My annotation there traces this view to Suarez.

SCORN
Contemptus

SCRIBE
Scriba

For discussion, *see* AUTHOR.

SECT, SECTARY, SECTARI
Secta, sectator, to follow (habitually, constantly)

The connotations, I think, are that a sectary follows a particular leader constantly, and hence (on the assumption that any leader is bound to go wrong some of the time) blindly or uncritically.

SECULAR
Profanus

SECURITY
Securitas

In TTP iii, 20, Spinoza says that the end of every state is to live securely and conveniently. There is a similar statement in TP i, 6. In TTP xx, 12, he says that the end of the republic is really freedom. Perhaps the tension is somewhat lessened if we recall that for Spinoza freedom requires mastery of the passions, and that in a state where there is no security, the passion of fear will be unavoidable and difficult to control.

SEDITION, SEDITIOUS
Seditio

See comment under REBELLION

SENATE
Senatus

In its frequent occurrences in the TP, I translate *senatus* by “senate.” Similarly in Letter 75. But this seemed wrong for the one occurrence in the TTP, in viii, 33, where “assembly of elders” seemed better.

SENTENCE
Sententia

It’s clear that *sententia* is used ambiguously, but not clear how best to capture the ambiguity. In one crucial context (TTP vii, 16–18), it seems that Spinoza is talking initially about linguistic

artifacts, considered in abstraction from their meaning, which is yet to be determined. I’m not sure this is what Spinoza means, but it’s what I mean when I translate *sententia* by “sentence.” Sometimes, however, he seems to be talking about the sentence taken, not in abstraction from its meaning, but as interpreted in a particular way, perhaps the most common or natural way. *See* TTP vii, 19, where I use “statement” to mean “a sentence interpreted in a particular way.” Two sentences will make the same statement if the same fact makes them true. Elsewhere Spinoza clearly has in mind the opinions those sentences express. In such passages I use “opinion.” *See also* UTTERANCE

SERVICE
Vacatio

SHAMELESSNESS
Turpitude

SHREWED
Callidus

Callidus occurs frequently in conjunction with *astutus* (here typically translated “cunning”). It seems clear that Spinoza intends some distinction between these terms, without its being quite clear what the distinction is. Both seem to refer to an ability to make intelligent use of your experience, combined, perhaps, with a certain lack of scruple. *Pace* Ramond (in his note to TP i, 3), I don’t think we can say simply that *callidus* has positive connotations and *astutus* negative ones. It’s true that *astutus* is connected with the notion of trickery, whereas *callidus* is more connected with a skill acquired by experience. But TP vii, 4 seems to be a context where both terms are used in a positive sense. Hence, I’ve rendered *astutus* by “clever” there.

SIMPLE
Simplex

Yes, this is a property of God. But it seems to just mean “not composed

of parts." See Letter 35 (and Letter 36 at IV/184).

SIN

Peccatum, peccare

In classical Latin and in Spinoza *peccare* has a much broader meaning than "sin" does in English, often being used to refer to mistakes and wrong acts without any implication of moral fault or religious offense. (The meaning seems to be much narrower in Ecclesiastical Latin.) This makes it feel somewhat strange to use "sin" for *peccare* in certain passages (e.g., in TP iv, 4–5, and viii, 19–20), where it was tempting to translate *peccare* by "do wrong" or "break the law." Nevertheless I decided that in this case I should accept a certain strangeness for the sake of consistency.

Spinoza's most important discussions of sin are in TP ii, 6–8, 18–23. TP ii, 6 is particularly interesting for its rejection of the doctrine of original sin.

SKILL

Ars

SLAVE, SERVANT

Servus

Servus is ambiguous between these two possibilities. Generally I have translated *servus* by "slave," but it's not clear that this is always appropriate. Cf. Spinoza's discussion of slavery in TTP xvi, 32–35, and his reference to the Babylonian captivity in xix, 13–15.

SOCIAL ORDER, SOCIETY

Societas

I favor "social order" as a translation of *societas* when I think Spinoza is conceiving the *societas* as one which has laws someone is empowered to enforce. This occurs frequently, and seems to be the most common usage. Cf. TTP iii, 14–16, 20; v, 18; xvi, 25; and especially iv, 29, where Spinoza equates forming a *societas* with setting up an *imperium*.

But sometimes Spinoza contemplates the possibility of a *societas* which

does not require laws, e.g., at TTP v, 20. There I prefer "society." This is a "possibility" only in a loose sense of the term: it would require all men to desire only what reason teaches them to desire, and men are not constituted in a way which would permit this "possibility" to be realized. "Society" also seems preferable at TTP v, 22 and 23, where Spinoza seems to be thinking of the members of the society as a collective entity, but in abstraction from the government they might institute, and at TTP v, 33, where he is thinking of a society as a collective entity which transcends the boundaries of any organized political community.

The index includes references to the correspondence with Oldenburg regarding the Royal Society, described as a "philosophic" society (IV/164). I use "alliance" when *societas* refers to the kind of union formed by two states, as in TP vii, 24.

SOUL

Anima

In general my preferred translation of *anima* is "soul." But *anima* does not occur often in the works translated in Volume II, and when it does, it's usually in the letters of Burgh or Steno. The occurrences in the TTP sometimes need to be translated by "life" or "breath."

SOVEREIGN(TY), SUPREME POWER, SOVEREIGN POWERS

(*Summum*) *imperium*, *summa potestas*, *summae potestates*

I take this family of terms to refer to the ultimate decision-making body in a state, whether that is an individual (as in a monarchy), a small group (as in an aristocracy or oligarchy), or the whole body of citizens (as in a democracy). Cf. Grotius 1647: "By supreme power (*summa potestas*) I understand the person or body with authority (*imperium*) over the people (*populo*) subject only to the authority of God" (I, 1). Similarly in Grotius 1625: "That [power, *potestas*] is

called supreme whose acts are not subject to the right of anyone else, so that they cannot be rendered invalid by the will of any other human" (I, iii, 7). Cf. Hobbes, DC v, 11.

As I understand his political philosophy, Spinoza, like Hobbes and Bodin, thought that there must be a sovereign in any state, though unlike them he preferred democracy to the other possible forms of government. In the TTP he makes this clear as early as v, 23, 25. Though *imperium* is highly ambiguous in Spinoza, TP ii, 17 seems to be a context where it is particularly clear that sometimes it means sovereignty.

SPEAK, SAY

Loqui

SPECIAL

Singularis, peculiaris

"Special" can represent either *singularis* or *peculiaris*, terms which seem to be used interchangeably in TTP iii, 22. But I translate *singularis* differently in different contexts, as special, but also as singular, individual, or particular.

SPECULATION, SPECULATIVE

Speculatio, speculativus

The notion of speculation enters into a number of central Spinozistic theses. He condemns making it a crime to hold certain speculative opinions (TTP Pref., 11). He is opposed to interpreting Scripture in the light of Greek philosophical speculations (Pref., 18; xiii, 4–6), and thinks religion would be improved if it were freed of all philosophic speculations (xi, 24). He contends that the prophets do not speak with authority when they discuss speculative matters (i, 24; ii, 15, 24–51).

But what are speculative opinions? It seems that Spinoza has in mind principally scientific, philosophical, or theological claims about such things as the nature of the solar system, the nature of God, and human freedom. In TTP ii, 52, speculative opinions are contrasted with those which concern the conduct

of our lives. And in iv, 16, they seem to involve contemplation of the nature of God. (Cf. Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* iv, 1; v, 2.)

In xviii, 23, Spinoza suggests that because speculative opinions are subject to debate, they are uncertain. But at xiii, 6, he says that the fundamentals of Scripture enumerated in the preceding chapter are speculative matters, and some of those at least—the existence and omnipotence of God, for example—are presumably propositions he thought were certain, if not for everyone, then at least for philosophers. Cf. v, 38–39.

STATE

Imperium, civitas, status

I discussed the problems of translating *imperium* at length in Curley 1997. Though I've changed my mind to some extent about the issues, that discussion may still be useful to fanatical Spinozaphiles. And anyone who can read French will want to consult Akkerman 1997.

"State" is still by far the term I use most frequently to translate *imperium*, understanding that term in those contexts to refer to any organized political society, no matter what its particular form of organization, so long as there is some person (or collective body) in it which has the ultimate authority to make, enforce, and repeal laws, and decide about war and peace, and other collective actions of the society. A central passage illustrating this usage is TTP iii, 12–21.

The term *imperium*, in this sense, thus implies that the government of a society so organized is sovereign. So in TTP iii, 47; v, 14, when Spinoza talks about the loss of the Jewish *imperium*, he is referring to a time when the Jewish state ceased to exist as an independent political entity.

Quite frequently Spinoza uses *imperium* to refer to the person (or collective body) which has the right or power to make final decisions, or to the power that person or body has. In such cases I typically translate *imperium* by "sovereign"

or “sovereignty.” Important passages illustrating this usage are TTP v, 23, 27–28; TP ii, 17. TTP xvi, 47, is an interesting context where *civitas* occurs in the sense of a state, and *imperium* to refer to its sovereignty.

Less frequent, but not rare, are contexts in which it seems best to translate *imperium* by “command” (TTP iv, 7, 27; vi, 4, 55; xv, 9; xvi, 61) or “control” (TTP ii, 51; xiv, 27; xv, 49; xvii, 8, 9) or “rule” (TTP iv, 68; v, 22; vi, 3, 4, 58, 69; xvi, 6; xx, 1, 3) or “authority” (TTP v, 22; xix, 35; TP ix, 14). Rarely it seems necessary to translate *imperium* by “empire,” e.g., in TTP x, 25 or xii, 39.

I take it that “second state” (*secundum imperium*) in discussions of the political history of the Jewish state refers to the period more commonly known now as the Second Temple period, which lasted from c. 538 B.C.E., when the exiles returned from Babylon and rebuilt the temple until the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. in the first Jewish-Roman war. This period may be subdivided into *the period of Persian domination*, from c. 538 to Alexander’s conquest in 332, *the Hellenistic period*, from Alexander’s conquest to the revolt of the Maccabees, c. 167, *the Hasmonean (or Maccabean) period*, from c. 167 to c. 63 when Pompey conquered Jerusalem and *Roman rule* began. During the Hellenistic period Judea was ruled first by Alexander, then by the Ptolemies, and finally by the Seleucids.

I have avoided translating the phrase *summum imperium* by “sovereignty,” which passages like TTP xvii, 49 made tempting, preferring “supreme command.” In TP vi, 10, Spinoza does use *summum imperium* in connection with a military commander who is not sovereign in the Hobbesian sense.

The English “state” also seems often to be the most natural translation for *status*, when that term is used as a very general term to refer to the condition of some thing.

STORY

Historia

See HISTORY

STRAIGHTFORWARD, GENUINE

Sincerus

Sincerus occurs infrequently, but in two important passages where Spinoza is describing the kind of history of scripture he is calling for. In TTP vii, 7, I rendered it by “straightforward”; in viii, 1, by “genuine.” “Honest” was a tempting alternative. In the only other occurrence I know of, it modifies *lectio*, and seems best translated by “natural.”

STRENGTH, STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

Fortitudo

Human power is to be measured by *fortitudo mentis* (III/280, 360). Note the equation of *fortitudo* with *libertas animi* at III/275. Cf. the analysis of this concept in E III P59S.

STRIVING

Conatus

The noun *conatus* is an important term in Spinoza’s metaphysics, referring to the striving of each thing to continue in existence and increase its power of action. The related verb *conari* frequently does not have a similarly special meaning, but is simply a quite ordinary verb referring to attempts to do something, without any reference to the striving for self-preservation. *Conatus* in its technical sense does not occur frequently in the texts in Volume II. The non-technical sense of the verb is quite common. I cite here a few occurrences which illustrate the non-technical usage—III/284, 309, 320, IV/268—but will not otherwise index it.

SUBJECT

Subditus, subijcere

As a noun “subject” in Volume II almost always refers to a political subject, not a logical one. The concept of a logical subject does occur in Letter 60, but only there, I think.

GLOSSARY

SUBJECT TO

Obnoxius

Generally “subject to” works well as a translation of *obnoxius* (though “liable to” or “vulnerable to” might work equally well). What we are vulnerable to in these cases is generally some evil (superstition, or an accident, or the affects). In one exceptional case I felt it necessary to render *obnoxius* by “servile flatterer.”

SUBSIST, STAND FIRM, CONTINUE IN EXISTENCE

Subsistere

The multiplicity of translations is undesirable and should probably be reduced.

SUPERIORITY

Praestantia

SUPERSTITION

Superstitio

On IV/323 Spinoza will say to Albert Burgh that fear of hell is the only cause of superstition, but this seems inconsistent with the analysis in the Preface to the TTP. For more, see RELIGION.

SUPPOSE, PRESUPPOSE

Supponere, praesupponere

Spinoza uses *supponere* frequently, sometimes in contexts where it seems to me natural to translate it by “suppose,” sometimes in contexts where “presuppose” seems more natural. (I would use “suppose” where the supposition is apparently explicit, and “presuppose” where it seems to be only implicit.) In medieval Latin both senses are apparently common, though it seems neither occurs in classical Latin.

Spinoza uses *praesupponere* and its cognate, *praesuppositio*, very infrequently. In those few contexts adherence to the rule of the preceding paragraph seems to require that I translate it by “suppose.”

SYMBOL (OBSCURE)

Hieroglyphicum

The Latin term is a loan word from the Greek, where it seems to refer only

to the symbols used in Egyptian writing. Spinoza uses it in a more general sense, to refer to symbols generally, with the connotation, I think, that the meaning of the symbol is obscure. The OLD has nothing to say about *hieroglyphicum*, but *Latinitas Hungariae* (the only dictionary in the Database of Latin Dictionaries to have an entry for it) offers an explanation consistent with this theory, and Glazemaker’s translations of the term confirm it. Most of the occurrences in the TTP (i, 20; ii, 20; and vii, 37) are nicely handled by this definition.

The occurrence in ADN. VIII (at TTP vii, 66) is controversial. Strauss took it to mean “unintelligible” or “essentially unintelligible” (Strauss 1988, 148). This seems to me indefensible, given Spinoza’s use of the term elsewhere.

TEACHER

Doctor

This is the role Spinoza assigns to Christ (in TTP vii, 31–32), where the contrast is with one who speaks as a law-giver. It is also the role he assigns to the apostles (in TTP xi), where the contrast is with one who speaks as a prophet.

TEACHING

Doctrina, documentum

So far as I can see, Spinoza uses the Latin terms pretty nearly synonymously, except that *documentum* is especially likely in contexts where the teachings in question are moral, whereas *doctrina* is more apt to be used when the teachings in question include those Spinoza would class as speculative. And in those contexts I am more apt to translate *doctrina* by “doctrine.”

TEMPERAMENT

Temperamentum

Classically *temperamentum* can mean either a mixture or blend of substances “in due proportion” or a compromise between extremes of policy, conduct, or character. Both meanings seem to be in play in Spinoza’s usage of this term: he thinks of a person’s psychological

GLOSSARY-INDEX

dispositions to cheerfulness or sadness as having a basis in the constitution of his body. (Cf. TTP ii, 13, 18.)

TESTIMONY, TESTIFY

Testimonium, testari

Testimonium can mean testimony, but often needs to be translated by “evidence,” e.g., at III/75/10, where the reference is to the signs by which Moses established his authority.

THEOCRACY

Theocratia

In TTP xvii, 31–32, Spinoza says the Hebrew state in the period after the covenant at Mount Sinai “could be called a theocracy,” on the ground that it made no distinction between the civil law and religion, counted anyone who was defective in religion as an enemy of the state, and considered anyone who died for religion as having died for his country. Religion here was understood as obedience to God’s revealed will. But he also says that all these things consisted more in opinion than in fact.

A bit further on in the same chapter (§ 41) he calls the Hebrew State after the death of Moses a theocracy, on grounds best explained in xvii, 60.

THEOLOGIAN, FOOLISH THEOLOGIAN

Theologus, theologaster

Theologaster apparently does not occur in classical Latin. There’s no entry for it in the OLD, or in any of the dictionaries available in the Database of Latin Dictionaries. It’s rare in Spinoza, apparently occurring first in a letter from Oldenburg to Spinoza (Letter 7, IV/37), and later in the TTP (xvii, 99). In each case it’s clear that the connotation is negative, though not clear precisely what the problem is with the theologians in question. Glazemaker’s translation in Letter 7 (*onnosele Godgeleerden*) suggests that they are foolish or silly. His translation in the TTP (*onbeleefde bylopers*) perhaps suggests rude and inexperienced apprentices.

Akkerman translates “pseudo-theologian” (TTP xvii, 99).

THEORETICAL

Theoreticus

At TTP xix, 51, Spinoza glosses *theoreticus* as the kind of speculation which can never have any use.

THINK OF, THINK UP, INVENT

Excogitare

THOUGHT

Cogitatio

TIME

Tempus

TRUST, TRUSTINGNESS

Acquiescere, credulitas, fides

TRUTH, TRUTHFULNESS

Veritas, veracitas

Veritas, of course, is just “truth.” *Veracitas* occurs only in TTP vii, 90, an important context which attempts to explain the nature of religion. The term is not classical, and available dictionaries of later Latin on the whole do not seem very helpful. But the general idea suggested by Chauvin’s *Lexicon* is that it involves an integrity in speech and action, which moves the person who possesses this virtue, not only to speak the truth, but also to do what she believes to be right.

TURK

Turca

Though sometimes Spinoza uses the term “Turca” to refer specifically to subjects of the Ottoman Empire (III/298), more commonly he uses it (as is common in the seventeenth century) to refer to Muslims, of whatever nationality. (Cf. III/8.) For Spinoza the Turks exemplify the worst aspect of ordinary religion: its use of superstition to control the common people, and its hostility to freedom of thought and expression (III/7). Consistently with his pluralist tendencies, he holds that Turks and other non-Christians “have the spirit of Christ” and

will be saved if they practice justice and loving-kindness toward their neighbors (IV/225b). He does not appear to think that Turks generally behave better or worse than any other religious group in this regard (III/8). But like many Europeans of his day, he is not well-informed about the history of Islam, thinking that it has never experienced schism. (Cf. IV/322a.)

UNCONDITIONAL
See ABSOLUTE

UNIVERSAL
Universalis, catholicus

(THE) UNIVERSE
Universum

Lewis and Short gloss *universum* as “the whole world,” or “the universe.” Chauvin’s brief equation of *universum* with *mundus* seems essentially to agree. I am inclined to add a qualifier: “the totality of *finite* things.” I suspect that most of Spinoza’s contemporaries would have thought that, if we set God apart, the things in the universe are all finite. But it seems to me likely that Spinoza does not think an enumeration of the totality of finite things (if it were possible) would tell us everything there is in the universe. In addition to the finite things, there are also the fixed and eternal things, which are infinite. Cf. TdIE 100–101 or E I PP 21–23.

UNMANLY, FEMALE
Muliebris

When *muliebris* is applied to a man, the more obvious translation might be “womanish,” but I have preferred “unmanly” because it seems to me to suggest more clearly a failure to live up to an ideal of manliness which I believe was important to Spinoza. Among the characteristics indicating such a failure would be a disposition to tears, and to invoke divine aid in danger (cf. TTP Pref., 4). There seems to be no denying that however enlightened Spinoza may

have been in other respects, he did not hold enlightened views about women, thinking them inferior to men, and naturally subject to being ruled by men (TP xi, 4). Nevertheless, he does sometimes attribute positive traits to the kind of mentality he thinks of as characteristically female, like a disposition to think of God as merciful. Hence, the translation of *ingenio muliebri* at TTP ii, 17.

USE, USURP
Usurpare

Usurpare can simply mean “use,” and is common in that sense in linguistic contexts. In political contexts it also occurs fairly frequently, but ambiguously, as it seems to me. There are contexts where “usurp,” implying the wrongful taking of power, seems inescapable (e.g., at TTP xvii, 30, 37; xviii, 37; xx, 3, 45). But there are other contexts where it seems best to avoid those negative implications. E.g., in xvii, 20, where Spinoza makes a general statement about what happens when kings take power. The immediate example is Alexander, whose succession to the throne was uncontroversially lawful. Sometimes it seems to me unclear whether the negative connotations are intended. E.g., at TTP xvii, 83, 113, and xviii, 6, the example is the high priests’ assumption of absolute power after the Maccabean revolt, which involved their assuming both religious and political authority. Spinoza clearly disapproves of their rule. But if the description of this event in 1 Maccabees 14 is correct, there doesn’t seem to have been anything unlawful about it. In these contexts I have chosen to describe their action as a “taking for themselves,” rather than a usurpation.

UTTERANCE
Oratio

I take it that when *oratio* is rendered by “utterance,” which is most of the time, the reference is to a spoken sentence considered in abstraction from the meaning which might be attached to it. TTP

GLOSSARY-INDEX

vii, 46 seems a clear case where this treatment is right.

VALID

Ratus

VENGEANCE, TO AVENGE

Ultio, ulciscor, vindex

VICE

Vitium

VIRTUE, EXCELLENCE

Virtus

Classically *virtus* has a wide range of meanings, among which the following are most prominent and relevant to Spinoza's thought: manliness, courage, strength, excellence, ability, worth, and merit. It can also mean moral goodness, though that meaning is not nearly as central as it is in English and certainly does not suggest chastity, as the English term does. The translation is biased in favor of translating *virtus* by "virtue," with the hope that this Glossary entry will be sufficient to correct potential misunderstandings. Frequently in contexts where the translation is "virtue," it would be equally plausible to translate by "excellence" or "power," and sometimes I have preferred those terms (particularly "excellence").

Spinoza's usage is undoubtedly influenced not only by classical authors, but also by Machiavelli's use of *virtù* in *The Prince*. This is an extremely important concept in Machiavelli, one of Spinoza's favorite authors. Students should pay particular attention to the discussion of Agathocles in Ch. viii.

VOTE

Suffragium

WAR

Bellum

WARNING, ADVICE

Monitio

WEAK-MINDED, WEAKNESS OF CHARACTER

Impotens animi, impotentia animi

"Weak-willed" would have been a good alternative. The defect appears to be an inability to control one's passions.

WEAKNESS

Imbecillitas

WEALTH

Divitiae

WELFARE

Salus, incolumitas

Incolumitas is rare, occurring only at III/231 and 233, where it is used (along with *pax*) to translate *shalom* in the quote from Jeremiah.

WHOLE

Integer, totus

WICKED; WICKEDNESS

Improbis, malitia

WILL

Voluntas, arbitrium

WISDOM, WISE

Sapientia, prudentia, peritus

I've tended to translate *prudentia* as "wisdom." Where I use "prudence," it's usually because of the presence of *sapientia* in the same context. Spinoza may not make a sharp distinction between these terms, but it's convenient to be able to record the difference even if it is only verbal. Classically the term *prudentia* emphasizes wisdom in practical matters, but it's not clear to me that it has that connotation for Spinoza. What does seem clear is that *prudentia* does not have for Spinoza the negative connotations (of excessive caution) which its English cognate seems now to have.

For a discussion of *peritus*, which I sometimes translate "wise," see the Glossary entry on EXPERIENCED.

WOMAN

Mulier

WONDER

Admiratio, portentum, miraculum

In Spinoza *admiratio* and its Latin cognates generally do not have the

positive connotations its English cognates do. So “wonder” or some variant thereof generally seems best, signifying a psychological reaction to an extraordinary event.

The Latin *portentum* does not, in Spinoza’s usage, seem to have the same connotations as its English cognate. It is an extraordinary phenomenon, whether or not it is taken as a sign of some momentous event to come. So it has seemed better to me to avoid using the English cognate.

WORD

Verbum

WORK, EFFECT

Opus

Opus occurs frequently in the controversy over faith and works, discussed in TTP xi, 21, and at greater length in TTP xiv. Note that Spinoza identifies the works necessary for salvation with the practice of loving-kindness and justice. See particularly TTP xiv, 33, and xviii, 26.

TTP vi, 22 is a key passage on the relation between God’s essence and the operations of nature. Chauvin’s definition of *operatio* as the exercise of some power or forces, from which an effect follows, seems to justify my translation of *operari* as “to produce an effect.” But I find that translation somewhat cumbersome, and sometimes translate by “act” or “operate.”

WORLD

Mundus

Mundus is commonly translated as “the world,” or (acc. to Chauvin) the structure of all bodies. I have not found any context in Spinoza where it is clearly given its Leibnizian sense of a totality of finite things considered as having

temporal dimensions, i.e., as enduring over time, from the beginning of the world to the end. (Cf. his *Théodicée*, Part I, §8.) But it seems clear that when Leibniz speaks of God as having chosen the best of all possible worlds, he was thinking of each world as having a temporal dimension, as having its future implicit in it at the moment of its creation.

WORSHIP

Adorare, cultus

Where *adorare* takes a divine being as its object (e.g., at III/8/23, 19/11), or a human being or other finite thing, improperly treated as if worthy of worship (e.g., kings, at III/6/33, or the books of Scripture, at III/10/25, or the golden calf, at III/40/21, or the Sun, Moon, Earth, etc., at III/81/33), I translate *adorare* by “worship.” But where the object is a human being not being treated as if divine (III/200/12–13), or God’s action through hidden external causes (as at III/47/23), “revere” seemed more appropriate. *Cultus* and its cognates seem less problematic.

WRITER

Scriptor

For discussion, see AUTHOR.

WRONG

Injuria

The etymology of *injuria* makes it clear that an *injuria* is a violation of law or of someone’s rights. This helps to explain the definition at TTP xvi, 41, and much of Spinoza’s usage. There will still be problems: it’s easy to think that injuries from other people violate our rights, not so easy to think that injuries from beasts do. Cf. TTP iii, 13.

ZEAL

Studium

Latin-Dutch-English Index

ABROGARE (LEGEM)

vernietigen, afschaffen (wet)

to repeal, disregard (a law)

III/71, 192, 207, 209, 220, 222, 241,
244, 245, 294, 303, 319, 331, 334, 348

ABSOLUTUS; ABSOLUTE

volkomen (en volstrekt); volkome(nt)lijk,
volstrekt(elijk), onbepaaldelijk, ganselijk
absolute, unconditional, finished; abso-
lutely, unconditionally, without quali-
fication, without reservation, without
exception, completely, simply, in itself,
by itselfIII/10, 11, 24, 51, 54, 55, 57, 58, 63,
65, 66, 68, 69, 73, 74, 78, 79, 85, 90, 91,
93, 116, 152–54, 160, 169, 172, 173, 177,
179, 181, 185, 187–89, 192–94, 197, 198,
202, 203, 205–11, 215, 221, 222, 229–31,
233–40, 272, 276, 277, 279, 282, 287,
292, 295, 297–99, 302, 308, 309, 313,
314, 317, 320–23, 325, 326, 331, 342,
347, 354, 358, 359IV/165, 170, 173, 180, 185, 186,
188, 189, 208, 263–65, 267, 278, 319,
331, 335

ABSURDUS

ongerijmd

absurd

III/5, 8, 37, 64, 83, 85, 87, 88, 91, 98,
116, 184, 188, 191, 194, 279, 286, 307,
325, 330–32, 341, 342, 347IV/166, 183, 245, 251, 253, 255, 258,
259, 278, 283, 309, 315, 319, 323, 326,
332

ACCOMMODARE

schikken, voegen

to accommodate, adapt

III/9, 37, 40, 42, 43, 54, 61, 62, 64, 65,
69, 70, 77, 99, 101, 104, 117, 148, 149,
151, 158, 167, 171, 173, 178–81, 183, 185,
199, 223, 228, 229, 232, 233, 236, 291IV/170, 171, 208, 209, 210, 214, 217,
301, 314

ACTIO; AGERE

werk, werking, doening; werken, doen,
handelen

action; to act, do

III/33, 38, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 68–70,
76, 81, 89, 92, 99, 103, 116, 178, 187,
188, 193, 194, 202, 215, 235, 241, 242,
247, 274, 275, 277, 279, 280, 282, 285,
286, 291, 292, 293, 295IV/221, 264, 285, 294–96, 297, 310–
12, 325, 328

ADAEQUATUS; ADAEQUATE

evenmatig; evenmatig(lijk)

adequate; adequately

III/64, 65, 84, 276, 280

IV/269, 270, 284

ADMINISTRATIO; ADMINISTRATOR, ADMIN-
ISTER; ADMINISTRAREbediening; bedienaar; bedienen, bestieren
administration; administrator, minister;
to administerIII/8, 72, 206–14, 217, 218, 220, 222,
234, 235, 237, 238, 275, 292, 299, 302–4,
306, 331, 332, 344, 345

IV/288, 289

ADMIRATIO; ADMIRARI, MIRARI; MIRUS;
ADMIRABILISverwondering; (zich) verwonderen (over);
wonderlijk, wonder; wonderlijk; wonderlijk
wonder, amazement, surprise, admira-
tion; to admire, to wonder (at), to be
amazed; amazing, astonishing, a wonder,
remarkable; admirable, wonderfulIII/5, 8, 9, 24, 27, 28, 34–36, 81, 84,
85, 90, 97, 98, 111n*, 143, 177, 179, 202,
204, 205, 216, 246

IV/178, 236, 250, 281, 287–90, 293

ADORARE

aanbidden

to worship, revere

III/6, 8, 10, 19, 40, 42, 47, 63, 81, 82,
92, 102, 127, 147, 159, 161, 162, 165,
176, 177, 200, 214, 218

ADVERSARIUS; ADVERSARI; ADVERSUS
tegenstrever; uit haat (werken), tegen
zijn, tegen strijden; tegen
opponent; to oppose, be opposed to, be
in conflict with; contrary (to)

III/7, 72, 81, 234, 244, 247, 274, 304,
313, 352

IV/166, 182, 212, 221b, 296, 300,
302, 316, 317, 324

AEQUALITAS; AEQUALIS; INAEQUALITAS;
INAEQUALIS

gelijkheid; gelijk; ongelijkheid; ongelijk
equality; equal, the same; disproportion;
unequal

III/15, 16, 27, 37, 45, 47–50, 54, 59,
61, 73, 74, 88, 170, 177, 195, 196, 198,
203–07, 211, 216, 218–20, 230, 237, 239,
241, 245, 290, 291, 303, 305, 313–16,
322, 327, 329–32, 334–36, 347, 357, 360

IV/190–92

AEQUITAS; AEQUUS; INIQUITAS; INIQUUS
billijkheid, gerechtigheid; rechtvaardig,
(het) billijk, het rechte, billijkheid, gerecht;
onbillijkheid, ongerechtigheid; onbillijk
equity, righteousness; equitable, (the)
right, fair, righteous; inequity; inequi-
table, wrong, resentful

III/31, 38, 52, 99, 103, 177, 178, 186,
196, 230, 231, 239, 241, 243, 247, 286,
305, 309, 312, 315, 317, 320, 321, 349, 350
IV/190

AESTIMATIO; AESTIMARE

achting; hoogachten, achten, waarden
evaluation; to regard (as), value (as), view
(as), assess, ask (as a price)

III/8, 9, 15, 27, 44, 72, 137, 204, 206,
210, 215–17, 234, 243a, 273, 280, 315,
320, 328, 346, 347, 355

IV/164, 166, 167, 209, 214, 216, 253,
301, 303

AETERNITAS; AETERNUS; AB AETERNO; IN
AETERNUM

eeuwigheid; eeuwig; van eeuwigheid;
voor eeuwig

eternity; eternal, everlasting, permanent;
from eternity; to eternity (usu.), forever
(occ.)

III/10, 27, 55, 56, 57, 62, 63, 68, 82,
83, 85, 86, 95, 102, 103, 113, 114, 157,
158, 162, 166, 192, 199, 216, 219, 220,
221, 222, 276, 279, 282, 284, 307, 318,
319, 325, 334, 354, 357, 358

IV/181, 185, 186, 198, 211, 224, 251,
255, 257, 281, 283, 284, 288–91, 293,
298, 308, 314, 319, 330, 334

AFFECTUS; AFFICERE

hartstocht, drift; aandoen

affect; to affect

III/6, 12, 25, 26, 31, 67, 73, 98, 187,
188, 190, 199, 202, 203, 214, 240, 273–
75, 278, 281, 284, 286, 291, 295, 297,
298, 308, 309, 311, 326, 352, 355–57,
359, 360

IV/208, 221, 266, 267, 312

AMBIGUITAS; AMBIGERE; AMBIGUUS

twijfelachtigheid; twijfelen; twijfelachtig
ambiguity; to dispute; ambiguous

III/100, 102, 103, 106, 107, 109, 126,
151, 165, 236, 317, 340

IV/209, 304

AMOR; AMARE; INIMICITIA; INIMICUS

liefde; beminnen, liefhebben; vijands-
chap; vijand

love; to love; hostility; enemy

III/8, 55, 59–61, 66, 67, 103, 168,
176, 191, 201, 202, 214–16, 233, 245,
274, 287, 288, 310, 356

IV/223, 259, 292, 296, 297, 318

Amor Dei, erga Deum, divinus;
Deum amare

love of God, toward God; to love God

III/41, 55, 56, 59–61, 67, 87, 165,
177, 178, 198, 283, 288

IV/213, 221–23, 312, 323, 327

Amor proximi, erga proximum
(concivem)

love of one's neighbor (fellow citizen)

III/168, 174, 176, 177, 216, 275

IV/216, 297

ANCILLA; ANCILLARI

dienstmaagd; een dienstmaagd van . . . ijn
handmaid; to be the handmaid of

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- III/11, 12, 29, 180–82, 184, 188
IV/298
- ANGELUS
engel
angel
III/19, 20, 21, 35, 40, 43, 64
IV/165
- ANIMA
ziel, leven
soul, breath, life, spirit
III/7, 23, 25, 50, 357
IV/253, 279, 281, 288, 289, 291–95,
297, 298, 303, 322
- ANIMUS
gemoed, ziel
heart, mind, spirit, disposition, soul,
intention, character
III/5–10, 12, 21, 22, 24–27, 31, 37,
41, 44, 47, 52–54, 57, 59, 62, 65–73, 75,
78, 79, 87–90, 99, 101, 103, 104, 116,
140, 144, 148, 151, 155, 156, 162, 167,
172–74, 176, 178–80, 186, 190, 194, 196,
200, 202, 203, 212–16, 218, 225, 226,
235, 239, 241, 243–45, 247, 274, 275,
280, 296, 298, 308, 310, 321, 324, 327,
340, 343, 360
IV/166, 167, 186, 187, 189, 195, 207,
267, 322, 327, 412
- APOSTOLUS; APOSTOLATUS
apostel; apostelschap
apostle; [status of] being an apostle
III/10, 13, 21, 28, 43, 72, 76, 108,
109, 112–15, 151–54, 155–58, 160, 162,
163, 164, 167, 169, 175, 221
IV/215, 282, 283, 285, 287, 288, 296,
314, 318
- APPETITUS; APPETERE
lust, begeerte; begeren, trachten
appetite, inclination; to want, desire, seek
III/22, 25, 73, 190, 191, 194, 198,
212, 219, 229, 275, 277, 279, 282, 283,
297, 320, 326, 331
IV/252, 266
- ARBITRIUM; ARBITRARI
believen, wil; achten, menen
will, decision, initiative; to think, reckon
III/52, 75, 104, 116, 151, 152, 193,
194, 197, 242, 292
IV/208, 210, 214, 216, 217, 252, 296,
325
Libertas arbitrii, liberum arbitrium
free will, freedom of the will
III/178
IV/222, 255, 263, 265, 267
See also LIBERTAS VOLUNTATIS
- ARISTOCRATIA, IMPERIUM ARISTOCRATICUM;
ARISTOCRATICUS
heerschappij der voornaamsten, bes-
tieting der voortreffelijksten; adelijk,
aristocratische
aristocracy, aristocratic state; aristocratic
III/208, 211, 272, 282, 284, 298, 323,
324–26, 328, 337, 346, 347, 353, 356, 358
IV/336
- ARS; BONAE ARTES
kunst, list; goede kunsten
art, skill, ingenuity, device, cunning; lib-
eral studies
III/24, 73, 187, 219, 239, 243, 247,
297, 299, 314, 315, 336, 346
IV/188
- ATHEISMUS
godverlochening
atheism
III/30, 87
IV/166, 218, 219, 221, 226
- ATTRIBUTUM
toevoeging
attribute
III/37, 40, 48, 64, 169–72, 175, 176,
179
IV/181, 260, 261, 275, 277–79, 302,
334
- AUTHOR
schrijver, iemand die radt of schrijft,
insteller, stichter
author (usu.), someone who urges an
action (rar.), someone who holds a posi-
tion of authority (rar.)
III/25, 35, 43, 55, 93, 98, 99, 101,
102, 105, 108–11, 119, 122–24, 130, 134,

144, 149, 162, 163, 181–84, 225, 272,
310, 334, 351

IV/164, 241, 251, 255, 286, 294, 295,
297, 301–3

AUTHORITAS

gezag, achtbaarheid (en gezag), macht
en gezag
authority

III/9, 16, 37, 38, 53, 69, 73, 74, 76,
80, 87, 97, 102, 105, 108, 110, 111, 114,
116, 117, 141, 146, 150–53, 155–57, 159,
166, 173, 180–82, 185–87, 196, 198, 202,
209, 214, 217, 218, 220, 222, 223, 226,
228, 234, 235, 237, 238, 241, 243–45,
247, 335, 355

IV/166, 261, 262

AXIOMA

kundigheid

axiom

III/76, 77, 167

IV/184, 197, 199, 209, 210, 212, 224,
260, 303, 305

BEATTUDO; BEATUS; BEATE

zaligheid, geluk, gelukzaligheid; zalig,
gelukzalig; gelukzalig
blessedness; blessed; blessedly

III/41, 44, 45, 50, 60, 62, 65, 67,
69–73, 76, 78–80, 87, 97, 103, 111, 116,
155, 164, 174, 184, 186

IV/213, 215, 256, 257, 298, 308, 327

BELLUM

oorlog

war

III/6, 32, 75, 78, 93, 122, 125, 163,
196, 197, 204, 207, 209–11, 214–16, 224,
227, 235, 282, 290–92, 294–96, 298, 299,
300, 303, 305, 306, 310–13, 316–18, 320,
322, 335–37, 348, 351

IV/164, 166, 168

jus belli

law of war, right of war

III/209, 210, 211, 290, 294, 296,
306, 317, 322, 351

BIBLIA

schrift

the Bible

III/91, 99, 101, 104, 106–8, 112, 135,
137–40, 145, 147, 148, 155, 158, 163,
181, 184–86

BONUS; BONITAS; BONA

goed, vroom; goedheid; goederen

good; goodness; goods, possessions,
property

III/5, 22, 25, 26, 31, 33, 35, 38, 41,
42, 44, 53, 62, 63, 66–70, 74, 77, 80, 99,
104, 116, 118, 137, 160, 166, 175, 177,
178, 184, 186–88, 191–93, 196, 216, 217,
232, 239, 241, 243–47, 279, 282, 283, 286,
291, 294–96, 299, 300, 305, 311, 316, 318,
328, 333–35, 342, 345, 346, 353, 354, 356

IV/166, 167, 208, 211, 213–16, 221b,
222, 262, 272, 284, 285, 291, 292, 293,
296, 300, 308, 312, 319, 329

bene agere, bonum agere

to act well, to do good

III/42, 50, 52, 54, 66

bonum commune, publicum

common, public good

III/194, 301, 333, 334, 345, 346

IV/274, 316, 329, 333, 334, 352

summum bonum

the supreme good

III/59, 60, 61, 103, 192

IV/220, 223, 228

CAPTUS; CAPERE

bevatting; begrijpen

power of understanding, grasp; to grasp

III/10, 21, 23, 36, 37, 42, 43–45, 54,
62, 65, 70, 77, 78, 81, 84–87, 92, 95, 98,
99, 156, 172, 173, 178, 180

IV/168, 208, 210, 214, 286, 314, 333

CASUS

geval, gevalig ding

chance, event, case, circumstance, outcome

III/31, 33, 87, 89, 92, 93, 101, 109,
124, 137, 163, 164, 229, 231, 274, 292, 353

IV/188, 251, 255, 259, 263

CAUSA

oorzaak

cause, reason, explanation, case

GLOSSARY-INDEX

III/5-8, 10, 15, 16, 18, 23, 27-30, 36, 38, 46, 47, 57, 58, 60, 81, 82, 84-86, 89-91, 94, 96, 107, 110, 111, 113, 115, 117, 127, 129, 131, 137, 139, 140, 142, 143, 149, 159, 161, 162, 173, 175, 178, 179, 187, 188, 198, 201, 204, 215-17, 220, 227, 236, 237, 239, 240, 245, 274, 276, 277, 280, 281, 284, 285, 288, 290, 292-95, 297, 299, 301, 302, 304-6, 308-11, 321, 325-27, 329, 331, 333, 338, 342, 353, 357, 358

IV/167, 172, 178-80, 182, 188, 189, 193, 194, 198, 207, 211, 232, 263, 264, 266, 267, 269-71, 275, 277, 278, 297, 302, 305, 307, 308, 312, 315, 317, 323-27, 329, 332, 333

CERTITUDO; CERTUS; INCERTUS

zekerheid; zeker; onzeker

certainty; certain, definite, fixed; uncertain

III/5, 9, 10, 15, 16, 18, 28-31, 34, 47, 48, 52, 57-59, 61, 66, 71, 81, 83-86, 88, 98, 99, 102, 105-7, 109, 111-14, 116, 126, 129, 130, 135, 137, 141, 149, 150, 152, 159, 160, 167, 170, 171, 175, 180, 185-89, 191-93, 199, 200, 211, 213, 233, 236, 237, 274, 275, 279, 281, 283, 288, 295, 308, 309, 313, 327, 354, 357

IV/171-73, 177, 180, 185, 186, 188, 189, 225, 243, 256, 260, 262-66, 275, 279, 281, 283, 284, 286, 288, 290, 293, 297, 298, 304, 307, 310, 318

certitudo mathematica (seu philosophica)

mathematical (or philosophical) certainty

III/30, 32, 179

certitudo moralis

zedige zekerheid

moral certainty

III/30, 31, 32, 111, 185

CHARITAS (ALSO SP: CARITAS)

liefde, genegenheid

loving-kindness

III/10, 11, 42, 71, 80, 97, 162, 166, 168, 170, 171, 173, 175, 176, 177, 179, 180, 185, 186, 216, 226, 229, 230, 243, 247, 288

IV/213, 226, 287, 296, 308

charitas erga proximum

love of one's neighbor

III/71, 168, 174, 176, 177, 216, 230, 243, 275, 288

IV/213, 216, 220, 226, 297

CIRCUMSTANTIA

omstandigheid

circumstance

III/17, 31, 34, 43, 75, 78, 89, 90, 94, 96, 166, 184, 290, 293

IV/216, 245, 248, 254, 325, 328

CIVIS; CONCIVIS; CIVILIS

burger; medeburger; burgerlijk

citizen; fellow citizen; civil, political

III/61, 196, 204, 206, 210-16, 219-22, 226-28, 238, 240, 241, 273, 276, 284, 285-88, 291, 293-95, 297, 299-303, 305, 306, 308, 309, 311-18, 320, 322, 329, 337, 342, 349, 354, 355, 358

IV/212, 213, 216, 217, 292, 293

CIVITAS

stad, staat, burgerlike staat, burgerschap
state, commonwealth, city, citizenship

III/22, 32, 38, 131, 136, 149, 195n, 196-99, 209, 214, 215, 231, 233, 274, 284, 285-300, 302, 304, 306-8, 309, 313, 315-19, 321, 324, 343, 346, 347, 351, 357

IV/217, 283, 285, 286, 293, 298

CLARUS; CLARUS ET DISTINCTUS

klaar, bekend; klaar en onderscheiden

clear, well-known, famous; clear and distinct

III/6, 9, 10, 16, 19, 20, 26, 30, 35, 38, 42, 43, 50, 58, 59, 60, 76-78, 84-86, 100, 101, 102, 104, 111, 113, 136, 148, 149, 171, 184, 336, 357

IV/183, 188, 198, 244, 254, 254, 257, 261, 264, 266, 269, 282

COACTIO; COGERE; COACTUS

dwang; dwingen; gedwongen, bedwongen
compulsion; to compel, coerce, force, constrain, require, necessitate; compelled, coerced

III/39, 41, 58, 59, 64, 71, 74, 75, 83, 97, 105, 116, 120, 124, 149, 150, 175, 177, 192, 193, 195-97, 200, 202, 205,

207–9, 214, 216, 218, 236, 239, 245, 278,
282, 296–98, 307, 311, 315, 316, 337,
342, 346, 354, 356

IV/171, 173, 195, 205, 222, 258–60,
263–65, 267, 295, 310, 312, 321

COERCERE

intomen, bedwingen, beteugelen,
dwingen

restrain, limit, keep within limits, put
down, compel, keep in check, control

III/7, 202, 212, 213, 225, 244, 246,
275, 312, 327, 346, 354

IV/313, 322, 326, 327

COGITATIO; COGITARE

denking, gedacht; denken, overwegen
thought, thinking, reflection; to think
(of), ponder, intend, deliberate

III/9, 17, 19, 36, 38, 48, 62, 65, 68,
93, 109, 110, 112, 135, 169, 178, 180,
182, 215, 227, 240, 243, 274, 287, 352

IV/174, 179, 184, 185, 188, 208, 259,
263, 265–67, 275–79, 290, 293, 294, 297,
302, 305, 333

COGNITIO; COGNOSCERE

kennis; kennen, onderzoeken

knowledge, inquiry; to know, to investi-
gate, learn, find out (about)

III/3, 10, 15, 16, 17, 21, 27–30, 42,
44, 59, 60, 63, 66, 68, 77, 80, 82, 85, 86,
98–101, 103, 106, 110, 111, 114, 117,
118, 150, 151, 153, 155, 164, 167, 168,
170, 172, 173, 175, 178, 198, 275, 316,
320, 333, 342, 343, 350, 353

IV/167, 169, 170, 189, 210–12, 214,
259, 261, 268, 269, 275, 277, 283, 285,
305, 306, 315, 326, 328, 329

cognitio Dei, cognitio divina; cog-
noscere (novisse) Deum

knowledge of God; to know God

III/15, 28, 37, 55, 56, 59–62, 67,
85–88, 168–72, 179, 198, 288

COHAERENTIA; COHAERERE

samenhangen; samenhangen

coherence; to cohere

III/191, 279, 319

IV/166, 167, 170, 173

COMMODUM, COMMODITAS; COMMODE;
INCOMMODUM

voordeel, middel, nut en voordeel, nut-
tigheid, bekwaam; in gemakkelijkheid;
ongemak

advantage, means, convenient, suitable;
conveniently, satisfactorily, comfortably;
disadvantage, inconvenience, bad conse-
quence, ailment, ill, difficulty

III/9, 48, 57, 70, 71, 76, 81, 82, 113,
159, 183, 188, 203, 243, 245, 246, 274,
284, 289, 353, 355

IV/216, 234, 235, 303, 322

COMMUNIS; COMMUNE

gemeen; het gemeen

common, general, ordinary, everyday;
collective body

III/7, 10, 12, 15, 23, 24, 27, 47, 53, 61,
64, 74, 80, 88, 99, 100, 102–4, 107, 111,
115, 117, 118, 129, 135, 138, 156, 162,
167, 168, 172, 177, 179, 194, 195, 205,
207, 210, 213, 215, 216, 229, 230, 242,
245, 247, 274, 276, 281–86, 288, 291,
292, 294, 296–99, 304, 308–12, 315, 319,
323, 329, 332, 333, 344, 346, 347–49,
352, 353, 355, 357, 359

IV/211, 228, 239, 251, 259, 260, 262,
275, 278, 281, 284, 286, 288, 315, 318, 321

CONATUS; CONARI

poging; pogen

striving; to strive, to try

III/277, 278, 279, 290, 291

IV/266

CONCEDERE

toestaan

concede, admit, grant, permit, allow,
yield

III/7, 11, 12, 18, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39,
53, 58, 66, 74, 76, 80, 88, 104, 115, 135,
139, 147–49, 153, 155, 159, 170, 173,
180, 182, 183, 189, 191, 195, 198, 201,
203, 214, 216–18, 220, 225, 226, 228,
235, 236, 238, 240, 243, 245–47, 282,
285, 287, 288, 303, 306, 307, 312, 315,
329, 332, 337, 345, 346

IV/212, 217, 225, 226, 236, 242, 251,
252, 254, 259, 260, 262, 267, 276, 284,
300, 303, 308, 310, 317, 318, 327

GLOSSARY-INDEX

CONCILIIUM

raad, raadsvergadering, vergadering
council, deliberation

III/101, 111, 144, 150, 164, 209–11,
222, 226, 242, 282, 292, 294, 301–5, 307,
309–13, 325, 326, 328–31, 333–35, 339,
340, 342, 344, 346–52, 354, 355, 358, 359
IV/175

CONCORDIA; CONCORDITER

eendracht; eendrachtelijk
harmony; harmoniously

III/179, 182, 194, 219, 224, 245, 246,
274, 288, 295–98, 311, 360
IV/242, 256, 259

CONDITIO; CONDITOR; CONDERE

voorwaarde, lijding, gewoonte, aard,
gesteldheid, stand, staat; stichter; bou-
wen, maken

condition, character, term, provision,
position, state; author, founder; estab-
lish, make, found, originate

III/7, 27, 31, 40, 49, 55, 62, 122, 128,
210, 211, 217, 218, 220, 222, 225, 226,
241, 244, 246, 274, 276, 290–92, 294,
306–8, 319, 321, 326–28, 331, 334, 336,
342–44, 346–49, 351, 354, 355, 359
IV/208, 211, 252, 293, 295, 297, 302,
317

CONFIRMARE

bevestigen, versterken

to confirm, prove, strengthen (the
authority of)

III/10, 20, 31, 32, 53, 65, 67, 69, 72,
73, 76, 77, 87, 90, 92, 120, 126, 129, 146,
147, 152, 153, 155–57, 159, 163, 167,
173, 176, 177, 186, 187, 198, 210, 211,
219, 227, 228, 233, 234, 242
IV/251, 258, 282, 298

CONFUSIO; CONFUNDERE; CONFUSUS; CONFUSE

verwarring; verwarren; verward; verwardelijk
confusion; to confuse; confused; confusedly

III/6, 29, 32, 35, 82, 84, 92, 100, 102,
105, 133, 148, 173, 188, 198, 237, 238,
278, 357, 358

IV/170, 180, 252, 255, 281, 287, 304,
305, 323, 324

CONSENSUS; CONSENTIRE; CONSENTANEUS
overeenkomst, toestemming; overeen-
komen; die ... overeenkomen

consent, agreement; to be in harmony;
consistent, in agreement (with)

III/40, 43, 65, 70, 74, 94, 101, 122,
124, 173, 178, 205, 230, 282, 321, 356
IV/170, 171, 176, 282, 285, 286, 321

CONSERVATIO; CONSERVARE

behoudenis, bescherming; bewaren,
behouden

preservation; to preserve

III/6, 12, 25, 46, 47, 53, 56, 57, 61,
68–70, 73, 83, 116, 190, 192, 193, 195–
97, 199, 200, 203, 205, 206, 222, 232,
233, 235, 242, 247, 276–79, 289, 291,
295–97, 306, 309, 314, 321, 323, 326,
329, 342, 346, 348, 354, 356, 357
IV/218, 239, 288, 289, 292, 296–98, 319

CONSILIIUM; CONSULTATIO; CONSULERE

berading, raad; beraden; zorgen

plan, advice, policy; judgment, prudence,
counsel, council, advisors; consultation,
consulting; counsellor; to plan, consult,
consider, look after; consider the interests
of, take care of, deliberate, ask advice

III/5, 6, 22, 24, 68, 131, 137, 150,
154, 183, 194, 195, 197, 199, 202, 204–7,
209, 210, 213, 220, 231, 233, 238, 240,
273, 274, 285, 289, 290, 297, 298, 301,
303, 308–10, 312–16, 320, 325, 329, 336,
340, 341, 344, 346, 352, 353

IV/164, 165, 168, 186, 187, 248, 282,
284, 291, 296, 299, 329, 330

CONSTANTIA; CONSTANS; CONSTANTER; INCONSTANTIA; INCONSTANS

standvastigheid; standvastig, bestan-
dig, volstandig; standvastig, volstan-
diglijk; onstandvastigheid; ongestadig,
onbestendig

constancy; constant, stable; steadfastly,
constantly; inconstancy; inconstant

III/6, 9, 12, 27, 29, 37, 47, 48, 54, 59,
62, 66, 67, 68, 82, 144, 152, 173, 196,
200, 203, 215, 217, 224, 225, 282–84,
286, 295, 296, 308, 320

IV/177, 189, 259, 264, 267, 318, 321,
322

CONSTARE

blijken, bestaan

to be evident, established, clear, show,
known from, consist of, be made up of,
depend on

III/9, 17, 29, 30, 31, 34, 40–42, 80,
81, 114, 115, 119, 164, 166, 182, 186,
204, 297

IV/188, 242, 261, 270, 275, 281

CONTEMPTUS, CONTEMPTIO; CONTEM-
NERE; CONTEMTOR

verachting; verachten; verachter
contempt, scorn; to disdain, hold s.o. in
disdain, scorn; one who disdains, despises

III/8, 9, 27, 43, 97, 103, 148, 158,
177, 187, 196, 202, 203, 223, 226, 293,
295, 320, 343

IV/219, 229

CONTINGENTIA; CONTINGERE; CONTINGENS
gebeurlijkheid; gebeuren; gebeurlijk
contingency; to happen; contingent

III/5, 33, 35–37, 40, 76, 81–83, 87, 92,
95, 110, 130, 133, 137, 140, 164, 166, 191,
194, 229, 231, 236, 237, 278, 343, 353

IV/211, 312

CONTRACTUS; CONTRAHERE

verdrag; verdrag maken

contract, agreement; to contract, agree,
enter into an agreement, conclude, reduce

III/196–98, 200, 210, 290, 291, 294,
306

IV/266

CONTRADICTION; CONTRADICERE

tegenzeg(ge)lijkheid; tegenspreken

contradiction; to contradict

III/40, 63, 139, 143, 147, 149, 184,
187, 281

IV/182, 184, 236, 243, 245, 250, 251,
256, 257, 260, 261, 263, 267, 283, 285,
294, 298, 304

CONTROVERSA

geschil (en tegenstribbeling)

controversy, dispute

III/7, 9, 104, 144, 150, 165, 177, 237,
244, 246, 309, 317

IV/168, 207, 209, 212, 256, 258, 260,
262

CONTUMACIA; CONTUMAX

hardnekkigheid, weerspannigheid;
stijfzinnig

obstinacy, stubbornness; obstinate, stub-
born, stiff-necked

III/12, 33, 43, 48, 53, 75, 78, 94, 153,
168, 172, 174, 176, 179, 180, 217, 219,
243, 295

CONVENIRE

overeenkomen

agree, make an agreement, be com-
patible with, meet, be applicable to,
converge

III/10, 16, 18, 28, 29, 42, 66, 68, 83,
84, 88, 98, 100, 103, 104, 113–15, 133,
134, 138, 140, 147, 148, 156, 157, 166,
172, 175, 185, 186, 194, 201, 213, 245,
274, 281, 290, 297, 304, 309, 314, 321,
326, 327, 334, 340, 341, 347, 348, 353,
354, 357

IV/166, 167, 169, 170, 173, 184, 194,
208, 210, 211, 240, 244, 251, 253, 257,
259, 270, 278, 283, 284, 288, 295, 299,
310

CORPUS; CORPOREUS; CORPORALITER;
INCORPOREUS

lichaam; lichamen; op een lichamen-
wijze; onlichamelijk

body, corpus; corporeal; corporeally;
incorporeal

III/8, 16, 18–21, 25, 26, 28, 30, 32,
33, 46, 47, 49, 57, 63, 69–71, 76, 93,
101, 113, 114, 181, 205, 234, 241, 278,
280, 282, 284–87, 292, 302, 306, 311,
331, 352

IV/172–74, 177, 188, 217, 240, 253,
255, 267, 268, 277, 279, 284, 292–94,
297, 298, 307, 313, 326–34

CORRUPTIO; CORRUMPERE; CORRUPTUS;
INCORRUPTUS

bederf; bederven; bedorven; onbedorven
corruption; to corrupt; corrupt; uncor-
rupted, without corruption

III/8, 10, 105, 106, 123, 134, 135,
148, 149, 158, 160–62, 165, 166, 180,
182, 183, 187, 203, 222–24, 242, 243,
247, 304, 311–13, 316, 317, 339, 341

IV/213, 288, 297, 323

GLOSSARY-INDEX

CREATIO; CREARE; CREATURA; RES CREATA
schepping; scheppen, verkiezen; schepsel;
een geschapen ding
creation; to create, appoint; creature;
created thing

III/18, 19, 25, 30, 39, 64, 68, 81–83,
113, 169, 217, 276–78, 286, 289, 296,
321, 331, 339, 347, 348, 350, 353, 354

IV/217, 222, 242, 246, 247, 251–53,
255, 259, 262, 266, 275, 277, 284, 289,
298, 310, 311, 329, 330

CREDERE; CREDULITAS; CREDIBILITAS
geloven, vertrouwen; lichtgelovigheid;
geloofwaardigheid
believe, think, trust, entrust, lend (money);
credulity, trustingness; credibility

III/5, 6, 8, 9, 19, 23, 25, 30–33,
35–43, 45, 50, 51, 54, 56, 61, 62, 78, 83,
86, 87, 90–94, 100, 101, 113, 114, 128,
133, 135, 136, 139, 150, 164, 166, 169,
170, 172, 174, 177, 178, 181, 185–87,
202, 204, 206, 207, 214, 215, 219, 240,
244, 246, 273, 274, 277, 287, 290, 292,
297, 298, 307, 309, 311, 314–16, 321,
348, 356

IV/178, 186, 196, 222, 226, 242, 247,
249, 252, 256, 261, 266, 282, 283, 285,
286, 288, 293, 295, 298, 305, 314, 315,
319, 320, 323, 328, 333

CULPA; CULPARE; CULPABILIS
schuld, misdrijf, vergelding; beschuldi-
gen; beschuldiglijk
fault, guilt; to blame; culpable

III/108, 273, 353, 357

IV/207, 220, 309, 310

CULTUS; COLERE
dienst, oeffening, toestelling; eren,
dienen
(form of) worship, pursuit, practice, cul-
tivation, ceremony, dress, refinement,
adornment; to worship, practise, culti-
vate, pursue, cherish

III/7, 8, 10, 19, 38–41, 45, 49, 55, 68,
72, 96, 106, 112, 146, 152, 160, 161, 177,
191, 198, 205, 212, 214–19, 226, 228,
229, 232, 233, 238, 243, 275, 281, 283,
288, 289, 296, 307, 311, 319, 329, 345

IV/207, 209, 212–18, 226, 287, 295, 311

CUPIDITAS, CUPIDO; CUPERE; CUPIDUS;
CUPIDE

lust, begeerte; natrachten; begerig,
gierig; met vermaak
desire; to desire; desirous, ambitious,
greedy; eagerly

III/5, 11, 17, 18, 46, 61, 73, 74, 81,
97, 157, 170, 171, 181, 190–92, 201, 203,
216, 218, 277, 278, 283, 297, 323, 324,
344, 351, 353–57

IV/166, 223, 228, 267, 305, 326, 327

CURA; CURARE
zorg; zorg dragen, zich bemoeien,
bezorgd zijn
care, concern, responsibility; to care for
or about, take care, look after, attend
to, heed, be concerned to/about, devote
oneself to

III/12, 16, 19, 28, 29, 38, 40, 41, 51,
60, 71, 74, 75, 77, 88, 97, 102, 104, 126,
157, 189, 210, 212, 218, 224, 236, 246,
247, 274, 275, 281, 282, 289, 295, 302,
303, 311, 329, 331, 332, 333, 338, 343

IV/215, 218, 231, 234, 235, 273, 286,
292, 297, 302, 335

DAMNUM; DAMNARE
kwaad, nadeel, schade; veroordelen
harm, loss, expense; to condemn,
discredit

III/7, 9, 31, 42, 63, 70, 71, 74, 75, 87,
104, 120, 168, 176, 180, 186–88, 191, 192,
196–98, 199, 201, 203, 207, 210, 214–16,
226, 232, 236, 238, 241, 243, 244, 246,
280, 286, 288, 290, 305, 321, 322, 334, 355

IV/210, 218, 236, 272, 288, 290, 291, 323

DECRETUM, DECRETALE; DECERNERE;
DECRETARE
besluit, besluiting, zinnelijkheid; besluiten
decree, decision; to decree, decide; make
religious decrees

III/5, 11, 15, 22, 25, 38, 42, 46, 54, 59,
63, 65, 76, 83, 85, 96, 150, 152, 153, 162,
164, 165, 184, 192, 195, 199, 200–202,
209, 211, 222, 223, 225, 228–39, 241,
242, 245, 247, 282–86, 289, 291, 292,
294, 296, 302, 303, 307–10, 333, 335,
338, 339, 348, 350, 356

IV/208, 211, 217, 224, 265–68

liberum decretum
free decision, decree, will

III/356

IV/265–68

DEDUCTIO; DEDUCERE

afleiding; afleiden, betogen
deduction; to deduce, [add: show], draw
(a conclusion), develop, reduce (a prop.
to absurdity)

III/21, 30, 62, 67, 68, 76, 77, 98, 105,
107, 112, 114, 130, 141, 153, 167, 175,
244, 274, 276, 308, 319, 347, 353

IV/183, 221, 254, 268, 270, 271, 278,
279, 333–35

DEFECTUS; DEFECTIO; DEFICERE; DEFICIENS
gebrek; afval; afvallen; afgevalen
defect, lack; defection; to defect, fail (in
one's duty to, loyalty to); a defector

III/6, 55, 56, 63, 65, 73, 107, 108,
112, 137, 152, 206, 210, 213–15, 217–19,
228, 293, 339, 346, 359

IV/166, 182, 185, 256, 260, 269

DEFENSOR; DEFENDERE

verdediger; verdedigen
defender; to defend, protect, preserve,
maintain, observe

III/6, 7, 11, 37, 44, 57, 71, 97, 98,
104, 118, 134, 161, 165, 176, 180, 182,
191, 193–96, 200, 205, 222, 226–28, 241,
244, 275, 280, 285, 295, 297, 299, 301,
309–12, 316, 327, 333, 337, 340, 344,
355, 357

IV/168, 242, 258, 261, 307, 308, 321

DEFINITIO; DEFINIRE

bepaling; bepalen
definition; to define

III/15, 27n, 57–59, 77, 98, 99, 115,
167, 171, 175, 176, 193, 195, 276, 277,
282, 288, 293, 296, 314, 318

IV/179–82, 184, 265, 266, 268–71,
277, 284, 333–35

DELIRIUM; DELIRARE

buitenspoorigheid; spoorlos zijn
delusion; to rave, be insane, be mad

III/5, 6, 9, 98, 134, 186, 189, 287

IV/250, 266

DEMOCRATIA; DEMOCRATICUS

volksheerschappij, volksbestiering;
volkelijk

democracy; democratic

III/193, 194, 195, 206, 230, 239, 245,
282, 284, 298, 310, 323, 329, 330, 358, 359

DEMONSTRATIO; DEMONSTRARE

betoging; betogen, tonen

demonstration; to demonstrate

III/7, 10, 11, 30, 33, 78, 82, 84, 91,
94, 99, 105, 111–15, 126, 150, 157, 159,
165, 167, 168, 170, 174, 175, 185–87,
230, 232, 235, 272, 274–76, 284, 291,
307, 314, 319

IV/173, 174, 179–81, 183, 184, 189,
195, 220, 221, 260, 274, 278, 279, 288,
296–98, 302, 315, 323, 324, 331, 334

DETERMINARE; DETERMINATUS

bepalen; bepaald, eindig
to determine, settle, make determinate,
limit, set limits to, define; [add: limited],
determinate, definite

III/9, 10, 25, 46, 57, 58, 75, 81, 82,
85, 103, 109, 110, 137, 140, 168, 173–75,
177, 184, 185, 189–91, 193, 195, 196,
216, 222, 229, 232, 235, 237, 240, 242,
243, 277–81, 285, 287, 291, 298, 323–26,
329, 332, 335, 339, 351, 355

IV/172, 177, 181, 184–86, 240, 259,
263–66, 269, 284, 288, 296, 315

DEUS

God

God

III/3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 15–21, 23–31,
33–44, 45, 46, 47–50, 52–55, 59, 60,
62–65, 71, 77–89, 93–96, 99, 101, 102,
113, 114, 120, 122, 125, 127, 135, 144,
150–54, 158, 160–65, 167–71, 173,
175, 177, 178, 179, 181, 183, 184, 186,
198–200, 204–16, 221–23, 225, 230, 231,
233, 239, 243, 247, 277–79, 282–84, 288,
289, 308, 346

IV/180, 182, 185, 186, 221, 259, 260,
261, 271, 283, 293, 295–97, 308, 310,
312, 316, 319, 328, 333, 335

idea Dei (obj. gen.), idea de Deo;

imago Dei

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- idea of God; image of God
 III/16, 19, 20, 30, 60, 61, 67, 84,
 87, 88
 IV/261
- mandatum, ordo, praeceptum Dei
 (divinum)
 God's (divine) command, order,
 precept
 III/38, 52, 89, 90, 122, 152–54,
 156, 174, 176, 198, 205, 206, 208,
 210, 229, 231–33
- mens Dei
 God's mind
 III/25, 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 52, 163
- natura Dei, divina
 nature of God
 III/15, 16, 18, 23, 38, 40, 62–66,
 68, 82–84, 162, 167, 171, 172, 176
 IV/179, 180, 185, 186, 208, 211,
 212, 221–23, 251, 252, 255, 260, 297,
 311, 312
- potentia Dei
 power of God
 III/23, 24, 26, 28, 38, 43, 45, 46,
 81, 83, 85, 189, 198, 205, 206, 276, 277
 IV/211, 325, 328
- potestas Dei
 'power of God
 III/23, 198, 284
 IV/312, 325, 326
- providentia Dei
 providence of God
 III/10, 20, 81, 82, 84, 86–89, 144, 229
 IV/168, 289
- regnum Dei, divinum, regnum coe-
 lorum, coeleste
 the kingdom of God, of heaven,
 God's kingship, divine kingdom
 III/65, 72, 103, 206, 214, 222,
 228–31
- verbum Dei
 word of God, God's word
 III/10, 17, 18, 89, 97, 138, 143,
 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164,
 182, 185, 186, 236
 IV/218, 282, 288, 294, 321, 323
- voluntas Dei
 will of God
 III/18, 25, 52, 62, 63, 65, 70,
 81–83, 85, 86, 89, 198, 199
 IV/259
- DEVOTIO; DEVOVERE; DEVOTE
 aandacht (tot God, in haar Godsdienst),
 godsdienst(igheid), godvruchtigheid; —;
 aandachtelijk
 devotion; to destine; in a spirit of devotion
 III/10, 17, 72, 73, 75, 78, 79, 81, 90,
 91, 94, 135, 148, 160, 161, 166, 177, 215,
 216, 239, 244
 IV/330
- DIGNITAS; DIGNARI; DIGNUS; INDIGNUS
 waardigheid, waarheid, staat, trap
 van waardigheid; believeen; waardig;
 onwaardig
 dignity, status, position conferring sta-
 tus, excellence, rank; to think fit, deign;
 worthy, deserving; unworthy
 III/8, 16, 38, 41, 51, 56, 72, 102, 142,
 214, 215, 220, 221, 224–26, 300, 312,
 321, 324, 330, 337, 346
 IV/165, 175, 177, 178, 235, 236, 265,
 276, 284, 289, 290, 293, 295, 303, 327
- DIRECTIO; DIRIGERE
 besturing; schicken, sturen, besturen,
 regeren
 direction, guidance, course, governance;
 to direct, guide, apply
 III/33, 38, 47, 61, 65, 77, 82, 88, 117,
 177, 178, 190, 191, 194, 197, 200, 202, 203,
 231, 274, 279, 284, 287, 292, 295, 344, 351
 IV/188, 264, 288, 289, 294, 325
- DIVINITAS; DIVINUS; DIVINITUS
 Goddelijkheid; goddelijk; als van Gods
 wegen
 divinity; divine, of God, religious; in the
 name of God, by divine agency
 III/5, 9, 15, 23, 24, 37, 38, 44, 53, 68,
 75, 81, 82, 97–99, 112, 113, 121, 122,

150, 155, 158, 160, 161, 162, 165, 169,
172, 173, 175, 180, 182, 198–200, 201,
206, 207, 213, 217–20, 226, 229–32, 236,
238, 239, 247, 273, 314

IV/214, 215, 217, 255, 256, 272, 284,
288, 312

divinitas Scripturae

divinity of Scripture

III/9, 98, 99, 130, 162, 165

DIVISIO; DIVIDERE; DIVISIBILIS; INDIVISIBILIS
verdeling; delen; deelbaar; ondeelbaar
division; to divide; divisible; indivisible

III/43, 72, 96, 107, 163, 193, 208,
210, 211, 223, 228, 235, 238, 285, 300,
306, 318, 324, 327, 338, 345, 349, 354

IV/182, 184, 192, 294

DIVITIÆ; DIVES; DIS

rijkdom; rijk; rijk

wealth, money; rich person; wealthy

III/57, 67, 70, 196, 225, 246, 299,
314, 356, 359

IV/219, 228, 229

DOCTOR; DOCTUS; DOCTRINA, DOCUMENTUM; DOCERE

leraar; geleerd; lering (en onderwijzing),
leerstuk (en bewijs); leren, onderwijzen
teacher, learned person; learned; teaching,
lesson, doctrine; to teach, show

III/7–10, 15, 16, 18, 28–31, 35, 37,
38, 39, 41–43, 44, 47, 50, 54–56, 59, 62,
64–73, 77–79, 87, 89–91, 96–99, 101–7,
112–15, 126, 141, 151, 152, 155–58, 160,
163–68, 172–74, 178–81, 183, 185, 186,
190, 198, 203, 206, 213, 215, 222, 225,
226, 229, 233, 235, 237, 240, 241, 244,
246, 247, 275, 291, 319, 346

IV/165, 168, 175, 189, 209, 210–12,
214, 216–19, 224–26, 228, 236, 281–83,
285, 287–90, 293, 295, 296, 298, 299,
308, 314, 315, 320, 328

DOGMA; DOGMATIZARE; DOGMATICUS;
DOGMATICE

leerstuk, regel; leren en onderwijzen;
onderwijzer; op een onderwijzende wijze
doctrine, authoritative judgment, teaching;
to propound a doctrine; dogmatist;
as doctrine

III/95, 152, 153, 158, 174–81, 184,
185, 206, 221, 237, 238

IV/210, 214, 217, 218, 224, 273, 282,
296, 298, 299

DOLUS

bedrog

deception, (evil) intent (to deceive), (w.
malus) bad faith

III/6, 186, 190–92, 193, 196, 239, 241,
243, 246, 279, 290, 342

DOMINUS; DOMINATOR; DOMINIUM, DOMINATIO; DOMINARI

heerschappij, heer; heerscher; heerschappij;
heersen

lord, master, mister; ruler; dominion,
mastery, command, domain; to rule, be
the master, to act as a despot, rule despotically,
dominate

III/19, 22, 27, 53, 66, 76, 87, 177, 195,
207, 209, 216, 226, 240, 278, 296, 298,
312, 313, 315, 318–20, 322, 332, 334, 359

IV/234, 283, 291

DONUM

gave

gift

III/15, 29, 41, 44, 45, 47, 50, 53, 78,
112, 113, 156, 162, 168, 170, 182

DUBITATIO; DUBITARE; DUBIUS; INDUBITATUS
twijfel(ing); twijfelen; twijfelachtig;
ontwifelbaar

doubt; to doubt, raise the question, wonder,
hesitate; doubtful; indubitable

III/5, 7, 8, 20, 28, 31, 32, 34, 38, 39,
50, 51, 57, 59, 84–87, 90, 102, 105, 108,
109, 111, 112, 114, 128, 133, 135, 136,
139, 140, 142, 144, 148, 151, 157, 165,
166, 169, 177, 182, 187, 188, 199, 231,
274, 278,

IV/166, 174, 186, 189, 243, 245, 256,
259, 260, 262, 269, 277, 278, 288, 289,
294, 308, 311, 317, 327, 331, 340

DURATIO; DURARE; DURABILE

during; duren; geduurzaamheid
duration; to last, endure; durable

III/6, 18, 74, 215, 221, 224, 280

IV/181, 185, 310

GLOSSARY-INDEX

DUX; DUCTUS (RATIONIS); DUCERE
 beleider, veldoverst, krijgsovererst, her-
 tog; beleid (van de reden); leiden
 leader, commander, officer, general,
 duke; guidance (of reason); to lead,
 guide, move, bring, take, think

III/20, 21, 55, 72, 80, 87, 106, 130,
 131, 188, 190, 192-95, 202, 203, 212,
 214, 219, 231, 274, 275, 277, 278, 280-
 83, 285-88, 291, 296, 297, 300, 305, 308,
 310, 312, 314, 315, 326-28, 331, 334,
 337, 348, 349, 356, 359

IV/165, 218, 223, 224, 282, 288, 295,
 296, 312, 318, 323

ECCLESIA; ECCLESIASTICUS

kerk; kerkelijk

church, place of worship; ecclesiastic

III/8, 9, 21, 76, 79, 114, 157, 167,
 175, 177, 228, 234-37, 244, 321, 345

IV/216, 280, 282, 283, 286-88, 290,
 291, 293, 295, 296, 309, 316, 317, 321-24

EFFUGIUM; EFFUGERE

uitvlucht; ontvluchten, overtreffen

escape; to escape

III/68, 159, 172, 198, 204, 310

ELECTIO; ELECTUS; ELIGERE

verkiezing; verkiezen; verkiezen,
 uitverkoren

choice, election, selection; chosen peo-
 ple, the elect; to choose, elect, select

III/9, 31, 33, 39, 44-50, 53-57, 69,
 110, 120, 126, 127, 137, 142, 150, 157,
 164, 173, 192, 194, 207-12, 218-20,
 222, 225-27, 234, 235, 238, 247, 256,
 279, 286, 292, 300-307, 309-13, 315,
 318, 321-24, 327, 328, 330-39, 341-45,
 348-52, 358, 359

IV/243, 278

libera electio

free choice

III/33, 358

IV/256

ENS; ESSE (AS A NOUN, SOMETIMES WITH
 GREEK DEF. ART. *to*)

wezen; 't wezen

being; being

III/38, 39, 40, 77, 93, 177, 287

IV/179, 181-86, 253, 256, 271, 275,
 278, 335

esse in se; inesse

to be in itself; to be in, be associ-
 ated with

IV/161, 179, 198, 291, 332

perseverare in suo esse, conservare
 se, suum esse

persevere in one's being, preserve
 one's being

III/46, 73, 189, 190, 196, 206,
 276-79, 289, 291, 295, 309, 346

quantum in se est

as far as it can by its own power

III/189, 190, 191, 278, 279

ERROR; ERRARE

doling, misslag; dolen

error; to err, be mistaken

III/12, 29, 41, 97, 98, 102, 105, 114,
 137, 147-50, 165, 171, 176, 180, 181,
 185, 199, 247, 280, 298, 327

IV/166, 174, 177, 209, 210, 213, 215,
 269, 270, 281, 285, 290, 292, 294, 298,
 305, 307, 323

ESSENTIA; ESSENTIALIS; ESSENTIALITER

wezenheid; wezenlijk; wezenlijk

essence; essential; essentially

III/63, 178, 276, 296

IV/180, 186, 212, 264, 275, 277, 278,
 284, 288, 303, 305, 313, 334

essentia Dei

essence of God

III/18, 20, 60, 82-85, 169, 179

IV/212, 240, 302, 333, 335

EVIDENTER, EVIDENTISSIME

klaar(blijke)lijk, zeer klaarlijk

clearly, with utmost clarity

III/42, 54, 56, 78, 96, 104, 109,
 111, 114, 118, 123, 125, 126, 129,
 144, 147, 148, 159, 160, 165, 168,
 169, 174, 177, 187, 211, 231, 233,
 238, 240

IV/168, 228

LATIN-DUTCH-ENGLISH INDEX

EXCOGITARE; EXCOGITATIO

bedenken; uitvinding

to think of, think up, design, invent,
imagine, devise, find, contrive; discovery

III/7, 8, 37, 97, 166, 173, 203, 205,
208, 214, 216, 226, 245, 305, 315, 336,
341, 350, 356

IV/209, 228, 261, 281

EXCOMMUNICARE

bannen

to excommunicate

III/222, 228, 235

EXCUSARE; EXCUSABILIS

verontschuldigen; verontschuldiging
hebben

to excuse; excusable

III/37, 68, 108, 143, 147, 153, 166,
187, 285, 316

IV/168, 264, 268, 274, 286, 310, 325,
327, 329

EXEMPLAR

afscript

pattern, model, copy, example

III/20, 109, 110, 129, 140, 149, 151,
171, 177, 178

IV/165, 233, 234, 273, 305, 335

EXEMPLUM

voorbeeld

example, model, precedent, deterrent,
case

III/6, 20, 57, 76, 82, 84, 88, 91, 94,
100, 104, 105, 108, 109, 115, 116, 127,
139, 141, 160, 171, 173, 183, 200, 210,
211, 220, 223, 225–28, 233–35, 244–47,
289, 297, 307, 314, 318, 321, 328, 331,
343, 352, 357

IV/213, 215, 228, 257, 263, 265, 267,
276, 278, 284, 290, 291, 294, 295, 298,
314, 328, 335

EXISTENTIA; EXISTERE

wezenlijkheid; wezenlijk to zijn

existence; to exist

III/38, 58, 60, 63, 81, 82, 84–86, 102,
165, 177, 179, 189, 191, 241, 276, 277,
279, 282, 287

IV/168, 172, 177, 179, 180, 185,
197, 198, 239, 240, 242, 243, 246, 249,

251–54, 257, 265, 266, 268, 269, 275,
277, 278, 284, 286, 313, 331–33, 335

existentia Dei

existence of God

III/10, 18, 19, 63, 81, 82, 84–86,
177, 179

IV/168, 183, 185, 197, 198, 240,
313

existentia necessaria

necessary existence

IV/179–84

EXPERIENTIA; EXPERIRI

ervarenheid, ondervinding; beproeven,
bevinden

experience; to experience, to learn from,
know by experience, to try, to test

III/16, 29, 47, 56, 70, 76, 77, 87, 92,
118, 153, 167, 196, 199–203, 205, 215,
231, 232, 239, 244, 246, 273, 274, 278,
298, 301, 312, 321, 336, 359

IV/174, 175, 197, 202–4, 236, 244,
247, 262, 265–67, 269, 282, 284, 285,
288, 290, 297, 305, 313, 321, 327

EXPERIMENTUM

ondervinding

experiment

IV/164, 166, 167, 169, 174, 177, 205

EXPLICATIO; EXPLICARE

uitlegging; verklaren

explanation; to explain, display, declare,
smooth out

III/16, 34, 36, 58, 84, 85, 91, 97,
101, 103–5, 108, 113–17, 122, 123, 127,
128, 132, 135, 148, 164, 167, 171, 175,
181–83, 208, 277, 308, 325

IV/166, 168, 174a, 183

EXPRIMERE; EXPRESSUS; EXPRESSE

uitdrukken; uitgedrukt; uitdrukkelijk

to express, to make explicit; explicit;
explicitly, expressly

III/10, 11, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26, 28, 38,
51, 55, 56, 60, 65, 67, 86, 95, 102, 106,
108, 111, 115, 128, 137, 147, 151, 153,
154, 163, 170, 171, 175, 176, 181–83, 186,
188, 192, 193, 197–200, 205, 206, 210,

GLOSSARY-INDEX

211, 221, 228, 229, 231, 233, 242, 247,
285, 287, 306, 307, 323, 326, 330, 333, 359
IV/179, 182, 184–86, 221, 223, 251,
253, 269–71, 277–80, 283, 305, 306, 309,
316, 334

EXTENSIO

Uitgestrektheid

extension, extent

IV/184–86, 268, 275–79, 331–34

FACIES

gedaante

face, aspect, form

III/18, 20, 21, 40, 121, 204, 297, 318

facies totius universi (naturae)

face of the whole universe (of the
whole of nature)

IV/276, 278

FACTUM

daad, bedrijf

deed, what someone has done, action, fact

III/7, 54, 89, 91, 96, 116, 119, 121,
166, 169, 197, 218, 222, 226, 227, 242,
245, 285, 292, 328, 352, 353

IV/251, 252, 255, 259

FALSUS; FALSITAS; FALSIFICARE; FALSO SIMILE

false, mistaken; falsity, something false;

falsify; improbable

III/8, 31, 43, 58, 87, 97, 105, 112,
114, 115, 137, 146, 152, 159–61, 172,
176, 182–86, 188, 192, 204, 225, 239,
243, 244, 278

IV/166, 167, 174, 189, 209, 217, 220,
221, 223–25, 260–62, 269, 281–83, 289,
290, 294, 308, 320, 324, 332

FAMA; INFAMIA; INFAMIS

gerucht, achting; laster en schande;

(formidable, good) reputation; disgrace;
notorious, disreputable

III/60, 70, 124, 204, 224, 242, 343,
346, 358, 300, 330, 360

IV/262, 300

FAMILIA; PATERFAMILIAS

geslacht; huis vader

family (generally in the TTP), clan (TP);

head of a family

III/55, 130, 141, 148, 211, 234, 300–
304, 305, 312, 313, 327, 329, 330, 333, 340

FAS; NEFAS; NEFARIUS

geoorloofd; schelmstuk, ongeoorloofd,
niet geoorloofd; ondeugend mensch
right, proper, permissible, not sacrile-
gious; sacrilege, wrong, impermissible;
wicked (man)

III/5, 7, 161, 203, 207, 226, 235

IV/166, 212, 310, 311

FATUM; FATALIS

noodlot, noodzaaklijkheid, uitgang; sch-
adelijk, droevig

fate, outcome, decree; destructive, fatal,
fateful

III/24, 58, 131, 137, 140, 162, 204,
227, 323, 353, 357

IV/208, 210, 211, 218, 221–23, 267,
310–12, 318, 324, 325

FELICITAS; FELIX; FELICITER

geluk, voorspoed; gelukkig; voorspoedig
happiness, prosperity, good fortune;
happy, fortunate, successful; successfully,
fortunately, auspiciously

III/5, 7, 44, 45, 47–49, 60, 67–71, 88,
126, 144, 158, 240, 243, 274, 310, 318,
320, 323, 359

IV/207, 213, 215, 220, 254, 272, 273,
290, 291, 296, 304

FIDES; FIDERE; FIDELIS; FIDUS; INFIDELITAS;
INFIDELIS

geloof, trouw (en oprechtigheid), belofte;
vertrouwen; gelovig; getrouw; onge-
lovigheid; ongelovig

faith, belief, good faith, trust, assurance,
word, loyalty, allegiance; to trust; faith-
ful, trustworthy; loyal; lacking faith;
nonbeliever

III/8–11, 15, 16, 30, 56, 61, 65, 69, 76,
78–80, 87, 91, 96, 99, 102, 108, 111–13,
118, 120, 142, 151, 154, 156, 157, 159,
166–71, 173, 174, 175, 176, 178, 179,
180, 182, 184, 186, 187, 192, 193, 196,
197, 199, 200, 203, 205, 210–12, 214,
219, 222, 224, 233, 242, 243, 245, 246,
[add: 247], 275, 280, 290, 291, 297, 298,
312, 314, 315, 321, 322, 356, 357

IV/168, 178, 214, 215, 228, 242, 243,
245, 249, 258, 262, 284, 286–88, 291,
295–97, 299, 303, 308, 313, 314, 320,
322, 328

fides catholica sive universalis
catholic *or* universal faith
III/174, 177
IV/285, 289, 318

FINGERE; AFFINGERE; FIGMENTUM; FICTUS
verdichten; opdichten, toepassen, toe-
schrijven; verdichtzel; verdicht
to feign, to invent, to suppose, to indulge
in hypotheses, to hypothesize, to make
up; to ascribe (fictitiously), to ascribe an
invention; invention; fictitious

III/5, 9, 19, 20, 28, 34, 36, 53, 65,
80, 82, 93, 96–98, 134, 135, 140, 147,
148, 150, 159, 166, 180, 184, 199, 210
IV/171, 182, 186, 189, 211, 212, 218,
220, 228, 245, 266, 267, 269, 297, 313

FINIS; CAUSA FINALIS

eind; eind oorzaak
end, purpose; final cause
III/42, 48, 58–62, [add: 82], 121, 156,
168, 179, 185, 194, 196, 203, 205, 220,
224, 240, 241, 295, 296, 316, 342, 350
IV/175, 209, 217, 272, 287, 288, 295,
305, 325

FIXUS; BONA FIXA

vast (en bondig, en bestendig); vaste
goederen
fixed, lasting, firmly established; immove-
able goods, real property [change in
proof]

III/45, 55, 82–84, 86, 95, 169, 191,
205, 290, 308, 311, 316
IV/188

FOEDUS; CONFOEDERATUS

verbond; bondgenoot (of verenigd)
covenant, alliance, agreement; ally, united
III/53, 55, 56, 159, 161, 163, 196,
197, 200, 209–11, 290, 291, 306, 315,
317, 323, 347

FORMA; FORMA SUBSTANTIALIS

vorm; zelfstandig vorm
form; substantial form

III/28, 221, 224, 227, 228, 297, 319,
321, 327, 330, 331, 341, 353–55, 358
IV/164, 168, 178, 208, 222, 224, 261,
268, 293, 312

FORTITUDO; FORTIS

sterkte, vroomheid; sterk
strength, strength of character; strong
III/22, 24, 193, 275, 280, 296, 298,
357, 360
IV/326, 327

FORTUNA; INFORTUNUM; FORTUNATUS;
FORTUITUS

geval, lot of geval, welvaren; ongeluk;
voorspoedig; geallig
fortune, good fortune, good luck, posi-
tion, fate, wealth; misfortune; fortunate;
chance

III/5, 6, 8, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47, 66, 68,
88, 101, 103, 115, 135, 144, 203, 212,
323, 324, 337, 345, 353–56, 359
IV/188, 247, 251, 252, 255, 259, 318

FRAUS; FRAUDARE

bedrog; leur stellen
fraud, intent to deceive; to cheat
III/186, 192, 203–5, 358

FUNDAMENTUM; FUNDARE; FUNDAMENTALIS
grond, grondvest, beginzel; steunen,
stichten, grondvesten; grond
foundation, fundamental principle; to
found; fundamental

III/9, 10, 11, 15, 21, 27n, 31, 47,
57, 64, 66, 68, 69, 73, 76, 95, 100, 102,
104–7, 114, 117, 118, 124, 135, 139, 150,
157, 158, 165, 173–77, 179, 186, 187,
189, 194–96, 231, 235, 240, 242, 276,
287, 295, 299, 302, 307, 308, 314, 340,
344, 346, 357

IV/190, 211, 221, 251, 252, 256,
281–83, 286, 287, 308, 311, 323, 330

fundamenta societatis/imperii/civitatis/
reipublicae
foundations of (a, the) society, state,
etc.

III/60, 189, 195, 214, 240, 242,
299, 301, 307, 308, 319, 323, 325,
326, 334, 340, 344–46, 351, 353, 356

GLOSSARY-INDEX

GENS; GENTILIS

volk, landaard; heiden

nation, people; pagan, gentile

III/7, 9, 39, 40, 48–51, 53, 55, 56,
69, 72, 114, 144, 153, 156, 158, 160,
167, 215, 217, 221, 321, 329, 331, 337,
341, 351, 356

IV/207, 213, 214, 218, 219, 226, 291

GLORIA; GLORIARI

roem; zich vermeten, zich beroemen

esteem, self-esteem, love of esteem,
glory; to glory, pride oneself, boast

III/34, 44, 71, 80, 157, 187, 193,
171, 203, 213, 222, 224, 226, 245, 274,
275, 297, 310, 311, 315, 327, 344, 354,
356

IV/197, 291, 297, 309, 328

GRATIA; GRATUS

genade; aangenaam

grace, favor; pleasing

III/53, 110, 165, 168, 169, 177, 188,
213, 275, 312, 313, 323, 335, 343

IV/167, 212, 291, 292, 294, 297, 298

Dei gratia

God's grace

III/26, 35, 41, 42, 55, 65, 151

HEBRAEUS; HEBRAIZARE; HEBRAIZANS;

HEBRAISMUS; HEBRAICE

Hebreer; Hebreeusche spreekwijzen
hebben; geen die hebben kennis van de
Hebreeuwsche taal; een Hebreeusche
spreekwijze; op de Hebreeusche wijze
Hebrew; to express oneself in a Hebrew
manner; Hebraist; Hebraism; in (proper)
Hebrew

III/9, 10, 15, 17, 22, 24, 27, 38, 39,
44, 45, 48, 50, 52, 54, 55, 63, 66, 69–71,
73, 76, 88, 92, 93, 100, 110, 111, 116,
133, 136, 141, 161, 162, 169, 203, 205,
206, 209, 210, 213, 215, 217, 221, 222,
230, 231, 233, 235, 237

HIEROGLYPHICUM

verborgen vertoning, inbeelding,
verbeelding

(obscure) symbol

III/20, 34, 105, 111n*

HISTORIA; HISTORICUS, HISTORIOGRAPHUS; HISTORICE

historie, geschiedenis; geschiedschrijver;
op een wijze, die geheel volgens de orde
der geschiedenis, op een geschiedenisser
wijze

history, story, (historical) account, (his-
torical) narrative; historical, historian;
historiographer; historically, in an his-
torical manner

III/19, 31, 35, 36, 43, 50, 61, 62, 66,
77–79, 89, 91, 92, 95, 99, 101, 105, 106,
109, 110, 119–25, 128–35, 140, 142–46,
148, 149, 156, 163, 164, 166, 167, 179,
184, 187, 203, 210, 212, 219, 224, 238,
278, 314, 315, 318, 331

IV/189, 197, 262, 286, 287, 290, 296,
324, 325, 330

historia, historicus Hebraeorum

geschiedenis, geschiedschrijver der
Hebreen

history, historian of the Hebrews

III/128, 129, 203, 221, 222, 244

historia naturae

history of nature

III/92, 98, 102, 185

historia Scripturae

history of Scripture

III/98, 100–102, 104, 111, 117,
118, 185

HOMO; HUMANUS; INHUMANUS

mens; menselijk; onmenselijk

man; human, secular, civilized: devoid
of human feeling, uncivilized

III/5, 6, 8, 10–12, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21,
25, 27n, 33, 34, 37, 38, 40–42, 44, 46–48,
58–62, 64, 66, 67, 69, 70, 73, 74, 77,
78, 80–82, 85–88, 91, 95, 97, 99, 112,
148, 156, 158, 161, 163, 164, 167–69,
171, 176–79, 182, 185, 186, 189–94,
198–202, 205, 213, 215, 218, 228, 229,
231, 240, 243, 244, 246, 247, 273–75,
277–79, 281, 283, 284, 286, 288, 289,
291, 293–98, 308, 311, 312, 314–17, 319,
322, 324–26, 328, 329, 342, 347, 351–53,
355–57, 359, 360

IV/165, 166, 168, 173, 174, 208–10,
213, 222, 236, 262, 263, 266–68, 272,
277, 278, 284, 285, 292, 294, 295, 308,
310, 315, 319, 325, 327–30

humana natura, natura hominum
human nature, nature of men

III/6, 15, 21, 27n, 46, 47, 58, 61,
64, 69, 73, 74, 88, 166, 191, 201, 244,
245, 273, 274, 276–78, 287, 291, 293,
294, 297, 308, 309

IV/166, 180, 252, 255, 309

HONESTUS; HONESTE; HONESTAS

eerlijk, oprecht; eerlijk; eerbaarheid
honorable; honorably, respectably, [add:
honestly]; decency

III/46, 77, 138, 140, 173, 176, 177,
212, 216, 244–47, 312, 317, 320, 326,
359

IV/318

HONOR

Eer, ambt

honor, public office

III/8, 19, 40, 56, 67, 70, 198, 208,
212, 218, 244, 293, 310, 313, 324, 327,
329, 334, 346, 354, 356, 357

IV/214, 217, 219, 228

HOSTILITAS; HOSTIS; HOSTILITER

vijandschap; vijand; vijandelijk
enmity; enemy; as enemies

III/8, 73, 121, 173, 190, 194, 196,
197, 201, 203, 204, 206, 210, 211, 213,
214, 224, 233, 240, 245, 281, 288, 289,
290, 293, 294, 299, 305, 306, 314, 315,
317, 320, 329, 346, 357

IV/258, 319, 321

HUMILITAS; HUMILIS

ontmoedigheid; nederig
humility; humble, abject

III/22, 121, 225, 319

IV/285, 289, 290, 323

HYPOTHESIS

onderstelling

hypothesis

III/131

IV/166, 168, 174, 176, 177, 180, 183,
184, 233, 252, 297, 314, 315

IDEA

denkbeeld

idea

III/6, 28, 30, 62, 67, 158, 284

IV/170, 188, 189, 199, 212, 240, 253,
257, 261, 269–71, 275, 277, 278, 280,
284, 302, 305, 320

IDEATUM

gedenkbeeld of gedachte

object

IV/174, 270, 277, 302, 305

IGNORANTIA; IGNORARE; IGNARUS

onwetendheid, onkunde; niet weten,
niet kennen, onkundig zijn; onwetend,
onkundig, dwaas

ignorance; not know, fail to know, be
ignorant of, have no knowledge of, know
nothing about, not be familiar with, fail
to be aware of; ignorant, unknowing,
foolish

III/5, 23, 27, 28, 30, 35–37, 39, 41–44,
47, 58, 65, 68, 71, 78, 79, 81, 84–86, 93,
95, 98, 106, 108, 109, 111, 114, 115, 123,
130, 134, 164, 168–70, 173, 175–79, 182,
185, 189–92, 197, 198, 204, 207, 245,
247, 277, 279, 282, 283, 291, 314, 320,
334, 337, 353

IV/166, 170, 208, 210, 211, 219, 224,
226, 227, 241, 251, 259, 261, 266, 267,
269, 289, 298, 307, 308, 310, 313, 324,
325, 328, 330

IMAGINATIO; IMAGO; IMAGINARI;
IMAGINARIUS

inbeelding, verbeelding; beeld; inbeelden;
inbeeldig, inbeeldelijk

imagination, way of imagining; image,
appearance, portrait; to imagine;
imaginary

III/5, 17–21, 27n, 28, 29, 30, 31–35,
38, 40, 48, 64, 81, 84, 85, 90–93, 111,
152, 153, 158, 159, 167, 171, 186, 317,
321, 356

IV/170, 189, 193, 243, 251, 253, 254,
261, 267, 284, 286, 313, 329

IMBECILLITAS; IMBECILLIS

zwakheid; zwak

weakness; weak

GLOSSARY-INDEX

III/25, 34, 38, 40, 42, 65, 66, 79, 82,
138, 172, 224, 359
IV/315

IMPERIUM; IMPERATOR; IMPERARE

heerschappij, rijk, macht; veldoverste;
gebieden

state, sovereign(ty), command, con-
trol, rule, authority, empire; ruler,
commander, dominion; to command,
rule

III/6, 7, 10, 11, 16, 41, 42, 47, 48,
49, 50, 54–59, 63, 64, 66, 68–76, 81,
82, 91–94, 96, 116, 122n, 125, 126, 128,
132, 152, 166, 178, 182, 184, 187, 190,
193–222, 224–37, 239, 240, 242–45, 247,
273, 275–77, 282, 283, 284, 285–303,
305, 306, 308, 309, 310, 312–15, 317–22,
324–38, 340–44, 346–59

IV/208, 213, 216, 217, 236, 286, 287,
321

primum imperium

first state

III/122, 215, 220–22

*secundum imperium

the second state [see Glossary on
“state”]

III/215, 220–22

summum imperium, summus impera-
tor, jus summum imperandi

supreme command, supreme com-
mander, supreme right to command

III/11, 193, 200, 209–11, 213, 234,
292, 300, 327

INDIFFERENTIA; INDIFFERENS

onverschillendheid; onverschillig, onver-
schillend, noch goed noch kwaad
indifference; indifferent

III/33, 38, 62

IV/213, 246, 250, 251, 255, 259, 266,
296

INFINITUS

oneindig

infinite, infinitely many, countless,
unlimited

III/5, 83, 86, 93, 246, 279, 287

IV/173, 174, 181, 195, 198, 199, 210,
244, 253, 256, 257, 260, 269, 270, 276,
278–80, 283, 289, 291, 319, 330–32, 335

INGENIUM

vernuft (en schranderheid), aard, (zin en)
verstand, zin en neiging, begrijp
mentality, (native) ability (or intelli-
gence), wit, talent, understanding, tem-
perament, mind

III/7, 11, 24, 33, 37, 42, 47, 53, 54,
61, 62, 65, 70, 75, 77–79, 102, 105, 117,
118, 147, 158, 167, 173, 177, 199, 203,
215, 217, 239, 244, 245, 275, 280, 282,
285, 286, 295, 309, 321, 341, 346, 352,
355, 356

IV/166–69, 207, 209, 220, 234, 250,
265, 281, 284, 290, 293, 301, 302, 305, 325

INJURIA; INJURIAM FACERE

ongelijk; ongelijk aandoen

wrong, injury, violation of right, assault;
to wrong

III/5, 47, 104, 106, 117, 141, 196,
198, 239, 341, 355, 356

IV/217, 218, 226

INSANIA; INSANIRE; INSANUS

dwaasheid; spoorloosheid veroorzaken,
buiten 't spoor lopen/hollen; zinneloos
insanity, madness; to be insane or crazy,
rave; insane, mad

III/5, 8, 9, 123, 129, 136, 180, 182,
183, 187, 287

IV/244, 246, 258, 283, 285, 286, 289, 290

INSTITUTUM; INSTITUERE

instelling, insetting; instellen

institution, something instituted, estab-
lished practice, custom, plan, purpose;
to institute, set up, organize, establish
a practice

III/16, 19, 49, 62–64, 69, 70, 74, 76,
103, 104, 108, 111n*, 118, 137, 150, 151,
160, 171, 187, 189, 190, 192, 198, 201,
203, 205, 208, 216, 217, 219, 226, 237,
238, 243, 244, 273, 274, 278, 282–86,
295, 296, 302, 303, 307, 308, 314, 321,
323, 326, 336, 338, 341, 344, 347, 348,
357, 358, 359

IV/207, 213, 215, 219, 272, 294, 304, 318

INTEGER; INTEGRITATE ANIMI; INTEGRITAS MORUM

geheel, volkomen, oprecht; oprechtheid des gemoeds; oprechtheid der zeden whole, complete, unprejudiced, unimpaired, undiminished, healthy, (with *de*) anew, again; wholeheartedly; integrity of character

III/7, 9, 10, 11, 62, 64, 73, 76, 77, 87, 90, 96, 106, 108, 111, 118, 123, 128, 150, 178, 194, 195, 198, 202, 205, 216, 229, 244, 278, 283, 284, 290, 292, 298, 300, 303, 304, 309, 315, 323, 324, 325, 329, 338, 345

IV/165, 186, 200, 204, 240, 254, 285, 300

INTELLECTUS; INTELLIGENTIA, INTELLECTIO; INTELLIGERE; INTELLIGIBILIS; INTELLIGENS

verstand; verstaan; verstaan; wel te verstaan, verstandelijk; verstanding intellect, understanding; understanding; to understand, to mean; intelligible; intelligent

III/8–10, 16, 18–21, 25–29, 34–36, 41, 45–48, 50, 57, 59–68, 72, 76, 77, 81–89, 92–94, 98, 100, 110–13, 115, 118, 119, 122, 123, 127, 129, 145, 163, 164, 167, 168, 170–72, 178, 184, 202, 207, 211, 274, 278–80, 293

IV/166, 168, 174, 188, 189, 209–12, 221, 222, 262, 263, 265, 269, 275–77, 295, 303, 310, 312, 320, 323

intellectus (absolute) infinitus
(absolutely) infinite intellect

IV/174, 278, 280

intellectus purus, pure intelligendum
pure intellect

III/29, 93, 98

IV/189

INTENTUM, INTENTIO; INTENDERE

einde, oogwit, oogmerk; uitstrekken, strekken, pogen, doelen

intent, purpose; to stretch, aim at, intend, have an aim, emphasize, be attentive to

III/27, 30, 43, 44, 46, 49, 79, 82, 87, 95, 108, 109, 134, 141, 167, 168, 174,

176, 180, 181, 184–86, 190, 191, 195, 199, 203, 218, 221, 240, 279, 286, 287, 292, 312, 355

IV/169, 261, 291, 302, 328

INTERPRETATIO; INTERPRES; INTERPRETARI
uitlegging, verklaring; verklaarder; verklaren, uitleggen

interpretation; interpreter; to interpret, translate

III/5, 9–12, 15, 16, 21, 24, 35, 52, 75, 82, 84, 91, 92, 94, 97–102, 105, 106, 108–17, 134, 135, 138, 148, 149, 151, 155, 159, 172, 178, 180, 192, 196, 206–10, 212, 218, 220, 222, 223, 225, 226, 228, 229, 232, 236, 237, 239, 240, 247, 282, 285, 292, 294, 320, 321, 341, 345

IV/210, 215, 219, 224, 225, 244, 282, 296, 315, 324

INVESTIGARE

opspeuren, naspeuren, verkrijgen, verstaan

to investigate, to find (out), search for
III/21, 28, 29, 76, 78, 85, 92, 98, 100, 102, 104–7, 112, 115, 164, 168, 185

IV/180, 215, 270

INVIDIA; INVIDERE; INVIDUS; INVISUS

nijd; benijden

envy, ill-will; to envy, be jealous of; envious; envied, detested

III/8, 44, 53, 193, 196, 203, 218, 225, 243, 274, 275, 281, 298, 312–14, 329, 335–37, 344, 352, 355, 356

IV/262

IRA; IRASCI; IRATUS; IRACUNDUS

gramschap; vergramd werden; vergramd; gramsteurig

anger; to become angry; angry; prone to anger

III/5, 6, 19, 31–33, 52, 65, 91, 101, 121, 161, 180, 190, 191, 193, 203, 217–20, 224, 225, 232, 241, 242, 244, 247, 274, 279, 281, 344

IV/218, 266, 291, 327, 328

ISRAËL; ISRAËLITA; ISRAËLITICUS

Israël; Israëliet; Israëlitische

Israel; Israelite, man of Israel; of Israel

GLOSSARY-INDEX

III/18, 20, 38, 39, 40, 49, 52, 55, 63, 64, 78, 87–89, 108, 121, 122, 124–27, 133, 134, 142, 144, 152, 154, 160, 174, 179, 210, 224

IV/178, 213, 314

JEHOVA

De Heer

Yahweh, THE LORD

III/18, 24, 38, 39, 71, 87, 162, 169–71, 217

JUDAEUS

jood

Jew, man of Judah

III/8, 16, 18, 19, 23, 24, 33, 39, 48–51, 53–57, 64, 69, 70, 72, 78, 79, 81, 87, 88, 90, 94, 105, 114, 116, 125, 145, 146, 158–61, 166, 167, 169, 170, 173, 186, 200, 224

IV/178, 213–15, 218, 287, 296, 315

JUDICIUM; JUDEX; JUDICARE

vonnis, oordeel, gerechtigheid; rechter; oordelen, vonnissen

judgment, court; judge; to judge

III/7, 8, 11, 12, 59, 61, 67, 72, 73, 79, 91–93, 96, 99, 101, 110, 117, 122, 125, 126, 130, 132, 133, 135–37, 149, 152, 153, 155–57, 160, 164, 168, 171, 172, 175, 177, 179, 182, 185, 187, 190–92, 199, 203, 207, 210, 211, 213, 214, 217, 219, 222, 223, 226, 229, 232, 233, 235–43, 245–47, 263, 280, 285–88, 291, 292, 294, 295, 304, 305, 307, 309, 316, 317, 319, 320, 322, 332, 333, 335, 339, 341–44, 348–51, 353, 355

IV/165, 166, 168, 174, 176, 177, 180, 183, 185, 186, 207–10, 213, 216–18, 222, 225, 226, 229, 230, 233, 241, 250, 251, 256, 257, 260, 265, 284–86, 294, 296, 298, 302, 305, 312, 315, 328, 335

JUS; JUS JURANDUM

recht, wet; eed

right, law, legislation, due, authority; oath

III/7, 10, 11, 15, 16, 27, 37–39, 49, 57–59, 73, 74, 75, 85, 111, 116, 117, 119, 122, 177, 189–94, 196–203, 205–8, 210–17, 219–22, 224–31, 233–42, 246, 247, 275–77, 279, 281–95, 298, 299, 301,

303, 305, 307, 308–10, 312–16, 318–35, 337, 338, 341, 342, 347–53, 355, 357–59

IV/166, 212, 217, 224, 233, 239, 273, 281, 296, 312, 320, 321, 325, 327, 329

sui juris esse; (alicuius) juris; communis juris

van zijn recht behouden, haar eige recht behouden, onder zijn/haar eige recht staan; aan een anders verbonden, onder een anders recht; van een gemeen recht

to be one's own master; subject to (someone's) control, something (the person) has a right to; subject to the control of the community

III/75, 76, 201, 208, 210, 225, 229, 230, 231, 235, 239, 240, 242, 280, 281, 286–89, 290, 291, 293–95, 299, 312, 314, 347, 351

jurisperitus, juris prudens

rechtsgeleerde

jurist

III/301–4, 313

jus circa sacra, jus sacrum

right concerning sacred matters, sacred right

III/11, 218, 219, 228, 234, 236–38, 247

jus divinum

divine legislation, law, right

III/73, 75, 198, 199, 213, 219–21, 225, 230, 232, 236, 312

IV/296

(jus et) institutum naturae

(right and) established practice of nature

III/189, 190, 192, 279

jus naturale, naturae

natural right, law

III/11, 72, 189, 190, 192, 193, 195, 198, 199, 201, 205, 221, 229, 230, 239–41, 276, 277, 279–85, 289, 290, 294, 318

IV/239, 335

JUSSUS; JUBERE

gebod; bevelen

command, order; to command, order,
ask (to do)

III/41, 60, 70, 75, 89, 90, 103, 104,
119, 122, 123, 130, 137, 153, 154, 174,
186, 194, 199, 200, 208, 209, 212, 221,
225, 231, 238, 302, 303, 346, 358

IV/233

JUSTITIA; JUSTUS; INJUSTITIA

gerechtigheid, rechtvaardigheid, bil-
lijkheid; gerecht, rechtvaardig;
ongerechtigheid

justice, equity; just, legitimate, righteous
(rar.); injustice

III/10, 11, 38, 42, 44, 45, 59, 64, 65,
67, 71, 72, 103, 104, 106, 110, 161, 165,
166, 168–73, 176–80, 186, 196, 206, 220,
221, 226, 229–31, 241, 242, 276, 284,
286, 304, 307, 320, 321, 332, 342, 357

IV/215, 226, 273, 291, 296, 298,
317–19

LAETITIA; LAETARI; LAETUS

blijdschap; zich verblijden; blij

joy; to rejoice; joyful

III/27, 32, 33, 44, 59, 74, 75, 216, 284

IV/295

LECTIO; LECTOR; LEGERE

lezing; lezer; lezen

reading (usu.), version, material; reader;
to read

III/61, 79, 80, 101, 109–11, 116, 122,
126, 127, 129, 134–40, 143, 146, 147,
149, 151, 153–55, 160, 180, 212, 217,
224, 238, 276, 314, 315, 318, 321, 337

IV/208, 210, 231, 237, 241, 243, 249,
259, 282, 291, 304, 306, 309, 317, 327

LEGISLATOR (SOMETIMES TWO WORDS:
LEGIS LATOR)

wetgever

legislator, promulgator of laws, lawgiver

III/41, 48, 59, 62–65, 70, 103, 162,
207, 220, 231

IV/175

LEX

wet

law

III/7, 10, 12, 17, 18, 26, 27, 32, 41, 44,
45, 47–50, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60–66, 67,
69, 71–73, 74, 75, 79, 80, 82, 83, 86, 87,
89, 95, 102–4, 113, 114, 116–19, 121–24,
126, 128, 133, 138, 150, 159, 161, 163,
166, 168, 174, 178, 190–93, 195, 196,
198, 206–10, 212, 216–18, 220, 222–26,
231–33, 238, 241, 243, 244, 246, 247,
283, 284, 290, 292, 293–95, 308, 310,
323, 326, 327, 329, 346, 348, 353, 355–58

IV/170, 172, 188, 189, 208, 209, 211,
215, 217, 310, 312, 331, 341–43, 336,
348, 359

lex Dei, lex divina

law of God, divine law

III/10, 23, 27, 49, 57, 59, 60,
61, 62, 64–66, 69, 70, 73, 79, 80,
82, 89, 122, 123, 127, 128, 158,
159, 161, 162, 165, 207, 208, 229,
232

IV/222, 223, 225

lex divina naturalis

natural divine law

III/61, 62, 66, 68, 70, 71, 72,
164, 166, 198

lex divina revelata, leges (Pen-
tateuchi, Mosis), leges Veteris
Testamenti

divine revealed law, laws of the
Pentateuch, laws revealed to
Moses, laws of the Old Testament

III/10, 11, 17–19, 23, 25, 26,
32, 45, 48, 61, 64, 71, 72, 76, 103,
113, 116, 119, 121–23, 127, 128,
133, 142, 150, 210, 222

lex (or regula) naturae, lex natu-
ralis, leges motus et quietis

law of nature, natural law; laws
of motion and rest

III/28, 46, 58, 62, 72, 82, 83,
85–89, 91, 95, 96, 189, 191, 199,
102, 229, 277, 279

IV/166, 170, 172, 211, 212

leges (humanae, nostrae) rationis,
leges Reipublicae

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- laws of (human, our) reason, laws of the body politic
 III/71, 190, 191, 195, 229, 279, 286
- LIBERTAS; LIBERARE; LIBER; LIBERALIS; LIBERE
 vrijheid; bevrijden, verlossen, voltrekken; vrij; ongeveerinsd; vrijmoedig
 freedom, release; to free, deliver, honor (a pledge); free, independent; worthy of a free man; freely
 III/7–12, 33, 41, 42, 49, 51, 54, 62, 65, 66, 71, 73, 74, 96, 98, 115–18, 126, 132, 135, 142, 156, 173, 174, 178, 179, 194, 195, 198, 200, 201, 205, 212–16, 221–25, 228, 233, 239–47, 273, 274, 276–79, 280, 282, 283, 294, 296, 297, 314, 315, 334, 335
 IV/165, 168, 175, 198, 204, 209, 210, 212, 218, 220–25, 255, 259, 263, 264, 265, 266–68, 286, 289, 305, 311, 312, 315, 318, 344–46, 352, 353, 357
- libertas animi; liber animus; liberali animo
 freedom of mind; free spirit, (abl.) freely; in a manner worthy of a free man
 III/9, 11, 41, 73, 193, 274, 275
 IV/220
- Libertas philosophandi, ratiocinandi, sentiendi
 freedom of philosophizing, reasoning, thinking
 III/3, 12, 117, 179, 189, 239, 243
 IV/166, 235, 236, 330
- libertas voluntatis, libera voluntas
 freedom of the will, free will
 III/43, 178, 278, 359
 IV/222, 255, 263, 265, 267
- LIBIDO; AD LIBITUM; PRO LIBITU, EX LIBITU, LIBIDINE
 begeerlijkheid, lust en begeerte, drift, geilheid en ontucht, overdaad; naar zijn/haar/hun believe, naar /zijn onze lust, na zijn vermaak; naar onze welgevallen, uit de lust, door drift
 desire, immoderate (overwhelming, capricious) desire, lust, itch, craving; as one pleases, as they wished, to our liking, anything we like; as an arbitrary example, from the pleasure (of), from immoderate desire, as pleases
 III/8, 35, 63, 73, 74, 75, 123, 134, 156, 203, 212, 216, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 246, 296, 299, 326, 355, 360
 IV/186, 232, 253
- LICENTIA; LICET; LICITUS
 baldadigheid, vrijpostigheid, verlof, ongebondheid, toegeving; geoorlofd zijn, gelegenheid hebben, mogen; geoorlofd license, unruliness, lack of restraint; it is allowed, permitted, one may or can; permitted
 III/7, 19, 35–37, 40, 43, 74, 75, 101, 104, 115, 124, 130, 135, 148, 149, 156, 159, 172, 173, 178, 190–92, 196, 198, 199, 201, 205, 215–17, 219, 224, 225, 227, 228, 232–35, 238, 239, 242, 246, 283, 285, 290, 295, 301, 302, 305, 306, 313, 316, 322, 327, 328, 334, 337, 341–43, 345, 349, 351, 353, 355, 360
 IV/166, 174, 183, 187, 208, 216, 232, 242, 243, 246, 252, 254, 270, 275, 281, 283, 286, 295, 300, 302, 315, 334
- LINGUA
 taal
 language, tongue
 III/28, 29, 100, 101, 105–7, 109–11, 114, 115, 134, 138, 144, 145, 150, 151, 157, 165, 167, 179, 183, 202, 217, 239, 351
 IV/227, 302, 315
- lingua Hebraica, Hebraea; apud Hebraeos, in Hebraeo
 Hebrew language; in Hebrew
 III/15, 33, 100, 105–11, 114, 133, 134, 138, 144, 150, 151
- LOQUI
 spreken
 to speak, say, (rarely) express o.s.

III/15, 17–21, 23, 26, 28, 30, 31, 38,
52, 56, 63, 65, 66, 68, 80, 91–94, 99, 100,
106, 109, 115, 121, 127, 128, 130, 134,
135, 143, 146, 148, 151, 152, 154–56,
161, 163, 170, 171, 179, 181, 182, 186,
206, 207, 220, 229, 230, 240, 241, 243,
283, 287, 351, 355

IV/209, 210, 212, 215, 262, 266, 284,
292, 295, 303, 314

loqui humano more, ad alicuius cap-
tum, modus loquendi
to speak in a human way, according
to someone's understanding, manner
of speaking

III/42, 44, 45, 65, 94, 106, 120,
121, 124, 135, 151, 153, 154, 172,
181, 198, 283

IV/315, 328

LUCRUM; LUCRARI [PECUNIAM]; LUCROSUS
winst; [geld] winnen; vorderlijk
profit, bribe, income; to win, make
[money]; profitable

III/17, 63, 81, 203, 290, 305, 311,
316, 353, 355

IV/190–93, 322

LUMEN NATURALE, LUMEN NATURAE

natuurlijk licht

light of nature, natural light

III/9, 10, 15, 16, 23, 41, 62, 66,
68, 76, 78–80, 84, 91, 94, 95, 98,
100, 103, 112–15, 117, 152, 155, 156,
162, 163, 167, 172, 185, 187, 188,
229, 230, 231

IV/225

lumen divinum, propheticum,
supra naturale, supernaturale, supra
naturam

divine light, prophetic light, super-
natural light

III/8, 9, 61, 68, 112, 113, 117,
167, 230, 231

IV/298

MAGISTRATUS

overheid, overigheid

magistrate

III/117, 223, 225, 241, 243, 244

IV/212, 215–18, 239, 299

MAJESTAS; MAJESTAS LAESA; MAJESTATEM
LAEDERE

achtbaarheid, achtbaarheid en gesag,
hoogheid, opperste macht; gekwetste
hoogheid; de hoogheid kwetsen

majesty; treason; to commit treason,
harm majesty

III/81, 188, 196, 197, 198, 205–08,
222, 228, 239, 240, 245, 293, 334

MALITIA

boosheid

wickedness, wicked conduct, malice

III/37, 96, 112, 135, 137, 160, 161,
165, 182, 274, 295, 354

IV/219, 264, 268, 294–96, 298, 308

MALUS

kwaad, schade

evil, bad

III/5, 6, 8, 22, 24, 32, 33, 37, 44, 48,
50, 52, 55, 59, 63, 66, 68, 74, 91, 97, 104,
126, 159, 165, 175, 178, 184, 191–94,
196, 202, 203, 226, 236, 239, 243, 245,
275, 279, 282, 286–88, 291, 294, 344,
326, 353–55

IV/207–9, 211, 213, 216, 220–22, 248,
268, 284, 293, 308, 312, 317, 334

MANDATUM

gebod, bevel

command, commandment

III/26, 27, 48, 54, 58, 62, 70, 73–76,
116, 122, 151, 154, 163, 169, 170, 172,
194, 195, 200, 202, 203, 206, 209–11,
216, 219, 229–31, 238, 285–87, 307

IV/208, 220, 223, 234, 235

MATHEMATICUS; MATHEMATICAE;
MATHEMATICAE

wiskundig; wiskunde; wiskunstiglijk

mathematician; mathematics;
mathematically

III/30, 32, 36, 111n*, 157, 179, 185,
187, 274

IV/168, 194, 256, 269, 297, 302, 323,
331, 333

GLOSSARY-INDEX

MENDA; MENDOSUS; EMENDARE

gebrek; gebrekkig; verbeteren
error; faulty; to correct

III/118, 135–37, 147–49, 158, 159,
164

MENS

geest, ziel, (zin en) mening, gemoed,
verstand

mind, intention, purpose, meaning, spirit,
thought, soul

III/5–7, 12, 16, 18, 20–22, 25, 26,
27, 29, 47, 52, 60, 64–66, 68, 70, 97, 98,
101, 102, 104–6, 108–15, 118, 135, 155,
159, 160, 170, 172, 176, 179, 180, 182,
184, 188, 191, 193, 201, 214, 229, 230,
241, 242, 244, 275, 278, 280, 281, 283,
285–88, 291, 296, 301, 302, 307, 309–11

IV/166, 168, 170, 179, 188, 189, 209,
210, 212, 216, 219, 223, 231, 233, 241,
255, 256, 266, 268, 272, 277, 279–81,
289, 290, 294, 297, 300, 304, 305, 307,
308, 310, 319, 323

mens authoris, prophetarum
author's intention, intention of the
prophets

III/66, 93, 98, 102, 104–6, 108–13,
115, 149, 163, 182, 284

IV/211

mens divina

divine mind

III/10

IV/212

mens humana

human mind

III/16, 20, 21, 25, 47, 58, 69, 118,
158, 277

IV/173, 174, 214, 272, 277–79,
284, 308, 325, 330

una veluti mente duci

to be led as if by one mind

III/281, 283–87, 297, 326, 331

METHODUS

middel

method

III/9, 90, 94, 98, 102, 104–7, 109–12,
114–17

IV/180, 188, 189, 262, 268, 269, 271, 336

METUS; METUERE

vrees; vrezen

fear; to fear

III/5–7, 12, 23, 61, 74, 75, 191–93,
201, 202, 206, 232, 233, 240, 274, 280,
285–88, 290, 293, 294, 296, 297, 312,
313, 316, 323, 326, 331, 341, 342, 351,
353, 355–57

IV/209, 216, 221–23, 245, 312, 323, 327

MILITIA; MILES; MILITARE; MILITARIUS

krijgsmacht, krijgsoordening; krijgsman;

—; —

army, armed forces, military; soldier; to
serve as a soldier; military

III/32, 208–10, 212–14, 292, 299, 305,
311–15, 327, 328, 335, 343, 354

MINISTERIUM; MINISTER

bediening; dienaar, bedienaar

ministry, task; minister, public official

III/8, 79, 89, 208, 212, 218, 222, 225,
235, 231, 236–38, 292, 303, 306, 307,
331–34, 335, 344, 349, 350, 353

IV/294, 295, 298

MIRACULUM; MIRARI; MIRUS

wonderdaad; verwonderen; wonderlijke
miracle, wonder, marvel; to wonder at, to
be amazed; amazing, astonishing

III/5, 8–10, 23, 24, 28, 31, 34–36,
45, 47, 49, 50, 53, 56, 68, 81, 82, 83–84,
84–85, 86, 87, 88, 90–96, 98, 99, 104, 109,
129, 136, 140, 141, 143, 161–63, 166,
167, 181, 182, 186, 188, 190, 218, 219,
226, 233, 279, 289, 317, 320, 322, 352

IV/165, 196, 211, 219, 220, 230, 250,
251, 260–62, 276, 285, 289, 290, 293,
295, 300, 304, 307, 308, 310, 313, 315,
321, 325, 328, 330

MISERICORDIA; MISERICORS; ; MISERERI

barmhartigheid, erbarmenis; barmhartig;
erbarmen

compassion, mercy; compassionate, mer-
ciful; to pity, have mercy on

III/9, 26, 27, 32, 33, 38, 40, 50, 52,
64, 65, 72, 169, 171, 172, 177, 178, 224,
247, 274, 275

IV/215, 280, 285, 291, 292

LATIN-DUTCH-ENGLISH INDEX

MODIFICATIO; MODIFICARE

wijziging; wijzigen

modification; to modify

IV/173, 216, 276, 279

MONARCHIA; MONARCHA; MONARCHICUS

eenhoofdige heerschappij, monarchie;

eenhoofdige vorst; eenhoofdig

monarchy; monarch; monarchic

III/7, 205, 207, 208, 211, 224, 226,

227, 235, 239, 271, 273, 282, 284, 298,

299, 307, 308, 317, 319, 321, 323–26,

328, 329, 331, 337, 340, 341, 344, 354

IV/286, 287, 296, 336

MONITIO; MONERE

vermaning; vermanen

warning, advice; to warn, advise, remind

III/12, 21, 27, 28, 30, 31, 38, 42, 43,

45, 50, 55, 76, 94, 103, 116, 121, 125,

147, 153, 156, 163, 188, 221, 223, 228,

231, 233, 236, 240, 247, 291, 319, 321,

333, 339, 340

IV/170, 189, 211, 303, 307, 309, 327,

328

MORALIA; MORES; BONI MORES; MORALIS

dingen de zeden betreffende; zeden;

goede zeden; zedig

(precepts related to) morals; prac-

tices, customs, ways, character; moral-

als; moral

III/12, 30–32, 35, 42, 56, 62, 65,

70–73, 101, 102, 111n*, 137, 152, 165,

185, 194, 213, 215, 217, 223, 234, 235,

244, 247, 280, 282, 283, 294, 324, 329,

339, 351, 355

IV/207, 209, 210, 212, 213, 215, 218,

219, 297, 303, 305, 328

documenta moralia; morale docere

moral teachings, doctrines, lessons;

to teach a moral doctrine

III/70–73, 99, 102, 111, 135, 156, 186

IV/222, 312

MORS; MORI; MORTUUS; MORTALIS;

IMMORTALIS

dood; sterven; dood; mens; onsterfelijk

death; to die; dead; mortal; immortal

III/6, 8, 25, 31, 41, 71, 72, 87, 90,

102, 119, 121, 124–27, 129–31, 133, 139,

149, 150, 152,

175, 182, 186, 188, 199, 201, 204–7,

209–11, 213, 215, 217, 219, 227, 232,

233, 234, 237, 245, 275, 287, 296, 305,

318, 319, 325, 334, 357, 360

IV/166, 208, 242, 254, 272, 282,

285, 288, 290, 294, 296–98, 310, 314,

322, 325

MOTUS; MOVERI

beweging; bewogen werden

motion; to move

III/9–11, 24, 32, 35, 36, 53, 54, 57,

78, 79, 89, 91–93, 113, 116, 123, 137,

140, 160, 161, 172, 176, 177, 179, 183,

211, 225, 239, 244, 246, 247, 288, 290,

293, 298, 334, 341, 343, 355

IV/165–67, 171, 172, 174, 177, 198,

205, 208, 210, 211, 214, 263, 266, 268,

271, 276, 292–95, 297, 303, 307, 331–33

motus et quies

motion and rest

III/102

IV/173, 177, 278

MULIER; MULIERCULA; MULIEBRIS

wijf; wijfe; vrouwelijk

woman; simple woman; unmanly, female

III/5, 29, 33, 170, 224, 359

MULTITUDO

de menigte

(the, a) multitude, multiplicity

III/6, 7, 10, 136, 203, 225, 274, 275,

282–84, 287, 288, 294, 296–99, 308, 309,

312, 318, 319, 323, 325, 326, 329–32,

342, 343, 347, 351, 352

IV/179, 256, 331, 332

multitudo libera

a free multitude

III/296, 297, 309, 319

MUNDUS

wereld

world, the earth

III/9, 23, 37, 39, 47, 64, 68, 72, 80,

89, 113, 114, 128, 163

GLOSSARY-INDEX

IV/164, 166, 167, 178, 208, 247,
251–53, 255–57, 259, 260, 274, 275, 278,
279, 281–83, 286–90, 294, 296, 298, 304,
313, 319, 320

MUTATIO; MUTARE; MUTABILIS; IMMUTATUS;
IMMUTABILIS

verandering; veranderen; veranderlijk;
onverandert; onveranderlijk
change; to change; changeable;
unchanged; immutable

III/36, 42, 57, 82–86, 89, 92, 94, 95,
105, 106, 108, 115, 129, 138, 149, 156,
165, 169, 218–20, 224, 227, 228, 244,
280, 290, 297, 298, 312, 318, 319, 321,
328, 329, 331, 335, 348, 353, 354, 358

IV/168, 182, 208, 209, 216, 286, 296,
297, 333, 335

MYSTERIUM

geheimenis, verborgenheid
mystery

III/9, 19, 65, 98, 118, 119, 129, 135,
136, 140, 141, 159, 167, 168

IV/210, 214, 285, 294, 323

NARRATIO; NARRARE; ENARRARE

verhaal, vertelling; verhalen; verhalen
narration, narrative, account, record of
fact; to narrate, to relate, to tell (of); to
describe fully, recount, expound

III/9, 17, 19, 20, 29, 31, 34, 36, 40, 41,
43, 48, 63, 66, 69, 77, 79, 82, 84, 89–94,
99, 101, 104, 108, 109, 111, 119–34,
141–43, 145, 152, 154, 156, 161, 162,
164, 167, 204, 210, 224

IV/178, 197, 210, 216, 227, 243, 244,
245, 248, 250, 254, 258, 267, 286, 309,
317, 321, 328

NATIO [= gens]

landraad, volk
nation

III/37–40, 42, 44–51, 53–57, 72, 74,
77, 79, 80, 93, 102, 119, 145, 154, 166,
205, 214–17, 233, 246, 351, 360

IV/322

natio Hebraea

Hebrew nation

III/39, 46, 47, 55, 70, 106, 126, 128

NATURA (TOTA); NATURALIS

(de gehele) natuur; natuurlijk
(the whole of) nature; natural

III/5, 9, 16, 18, 23–25, 27n, 29, 39,
42, 45–48, 58, 60, 73, 76, 81–92, 95–99,
101, 102, 117, 163, 178, 179, 185, 189,
190–92, 195, 198, 206, 217, 231, 276,
277, 279, 281, 284, 286, 288, 289, 293,
295, 297, 314, 315, 318, 319, 354, 359,
360

IV/166, 169, 170, 172–74, 176, 177,
180, 182, 212, 275, 283, 284, 304, 307,
310, 315, 325

pars naturae, totius universi

part of nature, of the whole universe

III/46, 277

IV/166, 167, 169, 170, 173, 176

potentia naturae, rerum naturalium

power of Nature

III/28, 46, 58, 81, 83, 189, 206,
276, 277

IV/198

res naturales

natural things

III/42, 45, 46, 58, 60, 81, 84, 85,
94, 96, 98, 99, 102, 168, 276, 277, 292
IV/332

supra naturam

above nature

III/86, 87

NATURA (= ESSENTIA)

natuur

nature

III/8, 10, 15, 16, 30, 38, 56, 57, 58,
60–63, 70, 73, 81, 95, 99, 106, 109, 111,
116, 117, 137, 152, 171, 183, 215, 274,
278, 280, 281, 288, 289, 294, 297, 308,
319, 320, 329, 341, 347, 353, 356

IV/169–73, 179–85, 188, 189, 208,
209, 211, 212, 215, 216, 251, 265, 269–
72, 278, 282, 297, 309, 316, 326, 327, 329

NECESSITAS; NECESSARIUS

nood, noodzakelijkheid; noodzakelijk

necessity, need; necessary

III/7, 11, 17, 19, 21, 30, 32, 46, 48,
49, 53, 57–65, 68, 69, 73–78, 82–86, 91,

92, 96, 98, 100, 102, 105, 108, 110, 111,
113–17, 123, 127, 130, 131, 147, 152,
153, 156, 157, 160, 164, 165, 168, 170,
172–76, 178–83, 185, 186, 188, 189,
191–93, 196, 198–203, 206, 208–12,
214, 215, 217, 221–24, 226, 228–36,
241–43, 245, 251, 252, 255, 256, 259,
265–69, 271, 273–75, 278–82, 285, 288,
289, 291–93, 296–300, 301, 303, 308–12,
315–18, 324–35, 337, 339, 341, 343, 344,
348–51, 353, 354, 357, 358, 360

IV/164, 179, 180, 183, 186, 188, 189,
200, 206, 208, 210–12, 214, 217, 221–24,
229, 251, 252, 255, 256, 259, 265–69,
271, 292, 293, 296, 297, 308, 310–12,
325–30, 333–35

NEGATIO; NEGARE

ontkenning, derving; ontkennen
negation; to deny, be opposed

III/21, 45, 62, 63, 78, 105, 115, 123,
136, 148, 150, 153, 174, 180, 182, 183,
184, 187, 190, 216, 228, 235, 236, 240,
243, 278, 286, 320, 325, 340, 355, 358

IV/184, 209, 210, 221, 225, 240,
242–44, 249, 251, 254–56, 258, 259, 261,
262–64, 267, 278, 283, 285, 286, 296,
297, 312, 314, 315, 317, 320, 321, 326–30

NEGLIGENTIA; NEGLIGERE [CL. SP: NEG-
LEGENTIA, NEGLEGERE]

onachtzaamheid, achteloosheid; laten
leggen, nalaten, achterlaten, verwaarlozen
negligence; to neglect, fail to pursue,
fail to care for

III/12, 58, 72, 98, 103, 104, 107, 112,
117, 137, 139, 160, 161, 174, 191, 312,
329, 331, 333, 354

IV/224, 259, 292

NOMEN

naam

name, noun, word, term

III/7, 15, 18, 38, 49, 53, 57, 58, 83,
97, 101, 106, 110, 120, 121, 128, 137,
138, 141, 148–51, 157, 161, 163, 169,
170, 204, 209, 213, 222, 227, 242, 292,
293, 300, 301, 315, 324, 333, 336, 342,
346, 351, 352, 355

IV/208, 211, 227, 239, 251, 257, 270,
285, 289, 291, 300, 305, 322

nomen Dei

name of God

III/18, 64, 120, 161, 169, 170, 186,
207, 211, 213, 220, 222, 223

NOTIO

kundigheid

notion

III/16, 28, 77, 84, 85

notio communis

common notion

III/61, 64, 84, 88, 99, 179

NOTITIA; NOTUS

kennis; bekend

knowledge, acquaintance; known

III/78, 83, 84, 110, 112, 114, 115,
145, 164, 344

IV/230, 261, 295, 297, 298

notum per se

known through itself

III/61, 76, 84

NUMEN

Godheid, God

divinity, deity

III/5, 6, 87, 88, 92, 204

IV/168, 214, 215, 218, 310

OBEDIENTIA; OBEDIRE

gehoorzaamheid; gehoorzamen

obedience; to obey

III/10, 11, 20, 26, 38, 44, 48, 64, 74, 76,
78, 79, 125, 160, 161, 167, 168, 172–79,
184–86, 188, 194, 195, 198, 199, 202, 206,
207, 211, 214, 216, 227, 230–33, 288, 307

IV/218, 220, 221, 288, 291, 292

OBLIGARE

verbinden

to bind

III/75, 122, 123, 161, 174, 198, 202,
294, 351

OBNOXIUS

onderworpen, onderworping

subject to (usu.), servile (once)

III/5, 6, 7, 47, 161, 275, 278, 281,
286, 289, 299, 320

IV/188

GLOSSARY-INDEX

OBSCURITAS; OBSCURUS; OBSCURE;
OBSCURARE

duisterheid; duister; duisterlijk;
verduisteren

obscurity; obscure; obscurely; to obscure
III/28, 34, 35, 65, 88, 94, 100, 103,
106, 107, 109–12, 118, 129, 135, 148, 199
IV/181, 183, 197, 246, 256, 257, 282,
300, 313, 333

OBSEQUIUM; OBSEQUI

gehoorzaamheid, onderdanigheid, gedi-
enstigheid; gehoorzamen

obedience, indulgence; to obey, comply
III/168, 174, 176, 202, 282, 283, 284,
294, 296, 299, 315

IV/305

OBSERVATIO; OBSERVANTIA; OBSERVARE

waarneming; eerbiedigheid; waarnemen
observation, observance; deference; to
respect, observe, keep, keep an eye on,
notice

III/7, 41, 48, 49, 54, 62, 71, 83, 102,
106, 119, 135, 141, 149, 176, 217, 218,
224, 231, 295, 301, 304, 308, 319, 326,
332–35, 338, 341, 344, 353

IV/166–68, 171, 177, 262, 269–71,
292, 333

OBTEMPERANTIA; OBTEMPERARE

gehoorzaamheid; gehoorzamen
obedience; to obey

III/38, 59, 97, 160, 170, 173, 174,
178, 193, 195, 199, 200, 202, 205, 216,
217, 228, 232, 233, 285, 307

IV/328

OBTINERE

bezitten, hebben, verkrijgen, beko-
men, behouden, verwerven, in handen
hebben

have, hold, obtain, achieve, be or remain
in charge of, maintain control of, suc-
ceed (in)

III/11, 57, 121, 125, 170, 182, 184,
188, 200, 204, 212, 218, 221, 229, 237,
281, 286, 295, 298, 308, 314, 318, 321,
322, 326, 329, 330, 336, 347, 349

IV/185, 211, 212, 217, 236, 240, 249,
260, 301

OCCASIO

gelegenheid (usu.), oorzaak (rar.)

occasion, opportunity, circumstances

III/51, 57, 101–3, 109, 110, 126, 131,
144, 188, 219, 223, 274, 343, 348

IV/164, 174–76, 236, 264, 268, 271,
277, 299, 303, 305, 329, 335

OCCUPARE

innemen, bezitten, bemachtigen

occupy, take the place of, appropriate
(for o.s.),

III/7, 47, 75, 85, 90, 91, 118, 127,
180, 203, 205, 227, 233, 302, 315, 329,
336, 339, 352

ODIUM; ODISSE, ODIIO HABERE; ODIOSUS

haat; haten; gehaat

hate, hatred; to hate; hateful

III/6–9, 22, 29, 56, 89, 97, 104, 174,
180, 190, 191, 197, 201, 202, 212, 214–
16, 233, 241, 245, 246, 274, 279, 281,
287, 304, 314, 343

IV/208, 223, 297, 321

OFFICIUM

ambt, staat, plicht, bediening

duty, function, office, service, favor

III/8, 50, 74, 75, 151, 157, 207, 209,
211, 228, 232, 234, 237, 288, 289, 292,
300–304, 306, 308, 314, 315, 322, 331–
35, 337–39, 341, 343, 346, 348, 350, 356

IV/164, 167, 177, 187, 209, 216–18,
227, 273, 311, 317

OMNIPOTENS

almachtig

omnipotent, almighty

III/52, 102, 165

IV/186, 284, 285, 289, 291

OMNISIENS

alwetend

omniscient

III/37, 38

OPINIO; OPINARI

gevoelen (en mening); menen, wanen

opinion; to think

III/7–11, 18, 23, 30, 32, 35–43, 47,
53, 54, 64, 78, 79, 81–83, 88, 89, 91–93,
98–100, 104, 110, 114, 132, 135, 140,

142, 172, 173, 177–80, 183, 184, 192,
206, 215, 225, 234, 239, 242, 244, 247,
281, 337

IV/166, 214, 218, 235, 242, 245, 247,
251, 252, 254, 287, 290, 294, 299, 304,
306, 308–10, 314, 324, 328, 333

opinio praeconcepta
preconceived opinion

III/35, 92, 101, 115, 167, 171, 180

IV/209, 246

OPPRESSIO; OPPRIMERE

verdrukking; verdrukken

oppression; to oppress, suppress, silence,
overpower, crush

III/103, 104, 204, 205, 213, 243, 246,
275, 281, 289, 323, 328, 352

IV/286, 287

OPTIMI, OPTIMI VIRI, OPTIMI CIVES,
OPTIMATES

voornaamsten, de besten (mannen, burg-
ers), voortreffelijksten

an/the elite, the best (outstanding) men
(citizens)

III/213, 241, 271, 273, 312, 324, 326,
344, 359

IV/320

OPUS; OPERA; OPERATIO; OPERARI

werk; vlijt, hulp; werk, werking; werken
work, action, task; assistance, deed;
operation; to produce an effect, act, do,
operate

III/11, 12, 23, 24, 46, 50, 58, 65, 73,
80–82, 84–87, 128, 157, 172, 174, 175,
179, 187, 189–91, 215, 216, 226, 230,
241, 243, 276, 277, 279

IV/166, 172, 177, 197, 198, 204, 205,
214, 215, 217, 222, 254, 255, 259, 263,
265, 266, 293–95, 297, 325

ORATIO; ORATOR; ORARE

reden; redenaar; bidden

utterance, speech, prayer; orator, spokes-
man; to pray, beg

III/8, 15, 26, 31, 37, 42, 52, 76, 100,
105–9, 116, 127, 128, 130, 135, 143, 145,
148, 149, 155, 161, 162, 164, 165, 181,
182, 204, 309

IV/272, 300

ORDO; ORDINARE; ORDINATUS

ordening (en sleur), staat; schikken; in
ordening

order, procedure, system, organization,
group, rank; to order, put in order,
arrange, organize; orderly

III/7, 30, 33, 34, 38, 39, 45, 46, 58,
77, 81–83, 86, 89, 91, 92, 95, 102, 118,
123, 124, 126, 128–31, 134, 135, 142,
143, 148, 161, 162, 174, 175, 183, 189,
191, 208–10, 237, 238, 275, 279, 292,
298, 299, 303, 304, 307, 314, 334–36,
338–40, 343, 348–50, 356–58

IV/166, 170, 177, 208, 211, 268, 271,
279, 288, 289, 294, 295, 298, 299, 303,
304, 314, 322, 329, 331, 333, 334–36,
339, 340, 348–50, 356–58

ordo (universae, totius) naturae

order (of the whole of) nature, or of
nature as a whole

III/10, 45, 46, 55, 81, 82, 84–86,
88–90, 95, 96, 162, 191, 199, 277,
279, 282–84

OTIUM; OTIOSUS

tijd, ledigheid, rust; ledig

leisure, (spare) time, freedom (from
work), tranquillity, peace; idle

III/12, 81, 144, 216, 218, 219, 227,
237, 315–17, 355

IV/269, 276

PACTUM; PACISCI; PANGERE

verbond, belofte, verbinten; zich
verbinden, verdragen, bedingen

contract, covenant, agreement; to make
a covenant, to contract, to agree

III/48, 53, 122, 123, 158, 161, 163,
174, 191–93, 196–200, 205–7, 211, 221,
223, 230, 242, 245

IV/217

PARS; PARTICULA

deel; deeltje

part, share, faction, side, party; particle

III/59, 77, 107, 185, 191, 194, 195, 208,
210, 212, 216, 220, 223, 239, 287, 306, 308,
309, 312, 313, 315–319, 322, 324, 328, 332,
333, 337, 340, 342, 347, 348, 350, 351

IV/170–73, 181–84, 260, 268, 292,
331, 332

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- pars, *particulae naturae*, *pars cuiusdam infiniti intellectus*
(small) part of nature, part of a certain infinite intellect
III/58, 82
IV/166, 167, 169, 170, 173, 174, 176, 191, 277, 279
- PASSIO; PATI; PATIENS
hartstocht, lijding, lijden, tocht; lijden; lijder
passion; to admit of, suffer, allow, endure, undergo; one acted on
III/22, 39, 40, 46, 49, 68, 74, 75, 89, 94, 101, 106, 118, 184, [check]152, 196, 200, 202–5, 214, 220, 226, 245, 277, 278, 292, 293, 298, 313, 315, 320, 329, 360
IV/172, 173, 182, 186, 281, 283, 285, 318, 319, 322
passio Christi
the passion of Christ
III/68, 163, 166
IV/285, 310, 325, 328, 330
- PATER; PATRIA; PATRIARCHA
vader; vaderland; aartsvader
father, forefather; (a person's own) country, native land, homeland; patriarch
III/12, 19, 39, 50, 71, 72, 104, 116, 117, 128, 130, 131, 136, 144, 160, 163, 169–71, 200, 202, 206, 209, 213–16, 223, 227, 231, 232, 247, 298, 318, 330, 333, 334, 337, 343, 345, 346, 355, 356, 358–60
IV/178, 250, 280, 282, 283, 285, 291, 303
- PATRICIUS
keurrad
patrician
III/323, 324, 326–37, 341–45, 347–51, 355, 356, 358, 359
- PAX; PACATUS; PACIFICE
vrede, rust, gemenerust; bezadigd; vredelijk
peace; peaceful; peacefully
III/3, 7, 8, 11, 32, 67, 80, 149, 179, 194, 195, 207, 209–11, 214, 221, 224, 227–29, 231, 232, 235, 240–42, 246, 247, 273, 282, 286, 288, 290–92, 295, 296, 298–300, 303, 305, 306, 308–12, 314, 316, 317, 320, 326, 327, 335–37, 343, 349, 354, 355, 360
IV/168, 175, 290, 293
- PECCATUM; PECCARE
zonde; zondigen
sin; to sin
III/20, 25, 37, 42, 52, 54, 70, 91, 135, 158, 159, 172, 178, 190, 198, 199, 211, 215, 229, 247, 276, 278, 282, 283, 284, 292, 293, 295, 331, 332, 353, 355
IV/282, 285, 289, 290, 293, 294, 310, 327–30
- PENTATEUCHOS
(Moses) vijf boeken
Pentateuch
III/38, 45, 117–20, 122–24, 152, 153, 170
- PERCEPTIO; PERCIPERE
bevatting; begrijpen, vatten, bevatten, verstaan, zien
perception; to perceive, grasp, see, find
III/10, 16, 18, 21, 27–29, 32, 33, 38, 58, 59, 63–65, 76–78, 82, 84, 85, 92, 93, 100, 111, 115, 122, 128, 149, 152, 162, 163, 165, 167, 188
IV/166, 174, 188, 189, 199, 209, 210, 222, 240, 255–57, 261, 269, 274, 275, 279, 297, 302, 324
perceptibilis; imperceptibilis
bevattelijk; onbevattelijk, onbegrijpelijk
the perceptible, perceivable; the impossible to perceive, incomprehensible
III/106, 109, 110, *III*, 116, 149
- PERFECTIO; PERFICERE; PERFECTUS; IMPERFECTIO; IMPERFECTUS
volmaaktheid; volmaakt, volkomen maken; volmaakt; onvolmaaktheid; onvolmaakt
perfection; to perfect, to bring to completion; perfect; imperfection; imperfect
III/21, 29, 53, 58–60, 62, 65, 67, 73, 82, 83, 88, 93, 95, 106, 118, 128, 129, 279

IV/168, 182, 184–86, 206, 208,
246, 248, 252, 257, 260, 270, 271,
282, 285, 286, 289, 290, 293, 295,
296, 298, 303

ens perfectissimum, perfectum
(most) perfect being

III/60

IV/179, 256

PERICULUM; PERICLITARI; PERICULOSUS
gevaar; wagen, in gevaar staan; gevaarlijk
danger, risk; risk, to be in danger;
dangerous

III/5, 11, 24, 47, 98, 187, 194, 196,
199, 201, 203, 225, 226, 228, 237, 240,
244, 295, 299, 311, 313–15, 318, 319,
326, 328, 330, 331, 335, 344, 346, 353,
354

IV/164, 190–93, 291, 292, 300, 304

PERITIA; PERITUS; IMPERITIA; IMPERITUS
ervaren zijn; ervaren, geleerde, verstan-
dig; onbedrevenheid; onervaren
expertise; experienced, learned, wise,
expert; inexperience; inexperienced

III/5, 102, 131, 150, 161, 164, 167,
172, 174, 240, 292, 306, 320, 336

IV/208, 209, 213, 230

PERSUASIO; SIBI PERSUADERE, PERSUADERI
vroedmaking; zich vroedmaken
persuasion; to persuade o.s., to believe

III/10, 32, 35, 43, 49, 55, 57, 74, 75,
78, 87, 88, 106, 110, 125, 133, 136, 140,
148, 180, 186, 204, 205, 212, 213, 237,
274, 275, 329, 341

IV/164, 170, 204, 207, 215, 219, 220,
226, 248, 250, 252, 258, 259, 272, 285,
286, 290, 292, 296, 297, 302, 304, 305,
307, 325, 330, 333

PHARISAEUS

Farizeeër

Pharisee

III/43, 53, 55, 71, 72, 105, 116, 118,
136, 138, 141, 146, 147, 150, 164, 180,
223, 225

IV/321

PHILOSOPHUS; PHILOSOPHIA; PHILOSO-
PHARI; PHILOSOPHICUS

wijsbegerig, wijsgerig; wijsbegeerte; op
de wijze der wijsbegerige redeneren,
wijsbegeriger te redeneren; wijsbegerige
philosopher; philosophy; to philoso-
phize; philosophic

III/3, 9, 10, 12, 16, 29, 30, 36, 41,
43, 44, 88, 92, 93, 95, 114, 115, 117,
158, 166–68, 172–74, 179, 180, 183, 185,
187–89, 198, 237, 243, 273, 274, 293

IV/164–69, 179, 199, 210, 225,
234–36, 241, 242, 244, 245, 253, 254,
256, 258, 259, 262, 268, 272, 273, 279,
281, 284, 287–89, 290, 292, 295, 297,
298, 301, 307, 311, 319, 320, 328, 330,
331, 333

PIETAS; IMPIETAS; PIUS; IMPIUS; PIE; IMPIE
godvruchtigheid; godloosheid, boosheid;
godvruchtig; goddeloos; godvruchtig;
godloos

piety, religious duty, dutiful conduct;
impiety, immorality; pious, one who
observes religious duties, religious duty;
impious, immoral; piously; impiously

III/3, 7–9, 11, 12, 16, 24, 27, 31, 37,
45, 50, 52, 55, 56, 66, 67, 77, 78, 80,
104, 111, 112, 116, 148, 159–61, 163,
165, 166, 172, 173, 176, 177, 179, 180,
182, 184, 197, 205, 206, 214–16, 218,
221–23, 225, 226, 228, 232–34, 235–37,
240–42, 244, 246, 247, 283, 286

IV/166, 167, 210, 212, 213, 215, 281,
290

PLACERE; PLACITUM

behagen, goed dunken; besluiting,
believen, believing en goedvinding
to please; decree, decision, fancy

III/6, 12, 21, 57, 58, 72, 82, 96, 97,
162, 173, 176, 297, 340

IV/215, 243, 248, 266, 268, 274, 293,
302–4, 309

PLEBS; PLEBEIUS

het (gemeen) volk, een gemeen man, de
slechste slag; van de gemene hoop
ordinary person/people (usu.), the mob
(occ. in TTP), plebeians (occ. in TP)

GLOSSARY-INDEX

III/6, 65, 77, 78, 91, 122, 138, 167, 172,
208, 219, 222, 223, 225–27, 240, 242, 244,
319, 320, 326, 327, 332, 335, 341–45, 355
IV/198, 199, 216, 217, 322

POLITIA; POLITICA; POLITICUS

staatkunde; burgerlijke bestiering;
staatkundig

organized community; politics; political,
political practitioner

III/3, 15, 67, 73, 91, 110, 132, 221,
246, 271, 273, 274, 276, 319, 321, 345

IV/178, 207, 218, 227, 234, 238, 276,
288, 299, 301, 303, 304, 306, 307, 313,
322, 323, 331, 335, 336

POLLICERI

beloven

to promise, give assurance

III/280, 291, 300, 313, 322

IV/167, 177, 230, 272

PONTIFEX; PONTIFICATUS; PONTIFICALIS

priester, opperpriester, pausgezind
priest, high priest, pontiff; (high) priest-
hood; priestly

III/48, 49, 55, 56, 105, 114, 146, 214,
218, 222, 223, 234, 237, 238

IV/296, 317, 324

(summus) pontifex Hebraeorum,
Judaeorum

Opperpriester der Hebreëen, Joden
high priest of the Hebrews, Jews

III/116, 117, 146, 208–10, 212,
213, 215, 219–22, 234, 235, 237, 238

pontifex Romanorum, Romanus

Roomsche Opperpriester

Roman Pontiff, Pope

III/116, 117, 235, 321

IV/296, 324

POPULUS; POPULARIS

volk; volkelijk

people; popular

III/8, 20, 23, 31, 35, 51, 53, 55, 61,
64–66, 74, 75, 119, 121–25, 127, 128,
132, 136, 138, 146, 152–54, 166, 174,
186, 194, 195, 207–9, 211–14, 217–20,
222, 224–27, 232, 235–37, 239, 298, 310

IV/213, 282, 336

POSSIBILIS, IMPOSSIBILIS

mogelijk; onmogelijk

possible, impossible

III/58, 63, 293

IV/205, 264, 269, 271, 274, 284, 330

POTENTIA; POTENS; IMPOTENTIA

macht, vermogen; machtig; onmacht

power; powerful; weakness

III/11, 16, 23, 26, 33, 38, 39, 41, 43,
46, 58, 81, 83, 84, 86, 88, 167, 169, 178,
189–91, 193, 194, 196, 201–3, 224, 228,
235, 240, 276–82, 284, 285, 287–91, 293–
95, 298, 299, 312–15, 318, 319, 322–27,
329, 332, 337, 342, 343, 345, 347, 349,
352, 354, 355

IV/173, 174, 182, 188, 220, 267, 277,
284–87, 310, 315, 329, 330, 332

POTESTAS

macht, vermogen

'power, right, discretion

III/11, 23, 29, 106, 116, 195, 196,
200, 203, 208, 222, 233, 235, 277–80,
284, 285, 287, 289, 291, 293, 298, 300,
306, 307, 309, 313, 315, 320, 322, 324,
331, 334, 353, 354, 359

IV/217, 239, 263, 267, 288, 293, 300,
312, 325, 327, 329

potestas, summa; summae potestates
supreme power; supreme powers

III/7, 11, 12, 14, 16, 116, 189,
193–99, 201, 207, 210, 225, 226,
228, 229, 232–35, 237, 238, 240–43,
245–47, 284, 286, 288, 289, 291, 292,
299, 310, 318, 324, 344, 348, 352

PRAECEPTUM; PRAECIPERE

gebod; bevelen, verbieden, gebieden

command, commandment, precept;

to command, order, tell s.o. (not) to
do s.t.

III/19, 41, 49, 60, 63, 64, 66, 80, 87,
103, 124, 128, 131, 156, 176, 185, 198,
208, 209, 223, 238

PRAEDICARE; PRAEDICATIO; PRAECO

verkondigen, leren; verkondiging;
verkondiger

to preach, proclaim, teach, make a claim,
predicate; preaching; preacher

LATIN-DUTCH-ENGLISH INDEX

III/10, 72, 112–15, 151, 153–58, 159,
162–64, 167, 170, 207, 233
IV/210, 281, 285, 294, 309, 321

PRAEDICTIO; PRAEDICERE
voorzegging; voorzeggen
prediction; to predict

III/5, 27, 30–32, 36, 48, 51–53, 55,
72, 87, 93, 120, 126, 142, 143, 150, 152,
162, 186, 211, 219, 226
IV/177, 295

PRAEJUDICIUM
vooordeel, nadeel
prejudice

III/7, 8, 10, 12, 35, 38, 43, 82, 91,
98–100, 104, 108, 110, 118, 180, 188, 217
IV/166, 207, 266, 267, 272, 296, 299,
302

PRAEMIUM
beloning, vergelding
reward, compensation
III/62, 70, 174, 178, 287, 316, 317,
328, 332, 356
IV/208, 209, 218, 220, 223, 324, 330

PRAESCRIPITUM; PRAESCRIBERE
gebod; voorschrijven
prescription; to prescribe
III/17, 44, 45, 48–50, 57–60, 62,
64–66, 75, 113, 168, 171, 178, 192, 212,
216, 239–41, 243, 275, 277–79, 283, 286,
295, 298
IV/189, 218

PRAESTANTIA; PRAESTARE; PRAESTANS
voortreffelijkheid; bewijzen, uitwerken;
voortreffelijk
superiority, excellence; to fulfill, make
good, render, achieve, provide, furnish,
supply; excellent, outstanding
III/12, 21, 37, 41, 46, 54, 61, 68, 79,
106, 135, 163, 195, 197, 201, 204, 231,
232, 239, 241, 245, 246, 278, 289, 291,
299, 323, 336, 346, 355
IV/188, 232, 253, 276, 293, 295, 303,
306, 310

PRAXIS
het gebruik
practice, actual life

III/201, 233, 242, 273, 274, 298, 307,
312, 325, 326, 358, 359
IV/273, 299, 307, 309

PRECATIO; PREX; PRECARI; PRECARIUS;
PRECARIO
gebed; gebed; bidden; bij vergunning
en te leen; bij vergunning, bij toelating
prayer; entreaty; to pray, implore; pre-
carious; precariously, by entreaty, at
someone else's pleasure
III/25, 91, 121, 150, 156, 190, 193,
204, 219, 220, 226, 299, 325
IV/208, 211, 291, 293

PRINCEPS; PRINCIPATUS
vorst; heerschappij, het vorstelijk recht
prince, ruler, leader; empire, rule
III/62, 63, 65, 70, 96, 141, 145, 178,
198, 208–16, 218, 221, 222, 231, 234,
237, 296, 297, 314, 322, 331, 332
IV/175, 234–36, 254, 281, 287, 299,
302, 319, 320, 323, 324

PRINCIPIUM
beginzel
(founding) principle, beginning
III/27–29, 39, 43, 84, 95, 98, 100, 114,
117, 156, 176, 276, 353, 354
IV/167, 181, 199, 209, 210, 213, 235,
239, 259, 262, 268, 281–84, 297, 298,
302, 329, 332

PRIVATIO; PRIVARE; PRIVATUS
derving; beroven; bijzonder
privation; to deprive; private, without
[= free of]
III/11, 62, 66, 96, 116, 137, 151, 196,
200, 201, 203, 208, 219, 220, 223, 233,
234, 236, 237, 274, 275, 289, 294, 296,
298, 309, 316, 322, 329, 332, 341, 346,
347
IV/184, 216, 217, 256

PROFANUS; PROFANARE
ongewijd, gemeen; ontwijden
secular, profane, unconsecrated; to pro-
fane (i.e., deprive something of its reli-
gious status)
III/50, 79, 159–62, 214, 220, 234,
236, 247, 315

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- Ex professo
met voordacht, voorbedachtelijk, met
voorbedachte raad
explicitly, intentionally, in detail
III/103, 109, 128, 166, 171, 172,
195, 221, 226, 228
- PROMITTERE; PROMISSIO
beloven; belofte, verdrag
to promise; promise
III/30, 41, 45, 48, 55, 56, 59, 70–72,
75, 91, 126, 131, 169, 192, 193, 197–200,
205, 207, 211, 214, 230, 233, 242, 291
IV/228, 288, 293, 295, 296, 330
- PROPHETIA; PROPHETA; PROPHETARE, PRO-
PHETIZARE; PROPHETICUS; PROPHETICE
profetie; profeet; profeteren; profetische;
op een profetische wijze
prophecy; prophet; to prophesy; pro-
phetic; prophetically
III/9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19–21, 23–37,
40–42, 44, 48, 49–53, 55, 56, 63–66,
69–71, 79, 80, 87, 88, 89, 92–95, 99,
101–5, 109, 111–15, 121, 125, 142,
143, 144, 146, 148–60, 162–64, 166–68,
170–73, 178, 180–87, 199, 205, 207, 210,
213, 220, 223, 224, 226, 230, 236, 238,
283, 284, 319
IV/165, 209, 210, 213, 214, 218, 223,
225, 283, 328
- Prophetae falsi et veri
false and true prophets
III/31, 33, 87, 186, 207, 220, 225
- PROPRIETAS; PROPRIUM; PROPRIUS; PROPRIE
eigenschap; eigen; uw, hun eige; eigentlijk
property; peculiar property; proper,
rightly belonging to, peculiarly belong-
ing to, (a person or thing's) own; literally
III/39, 60, 63, 95, 99, 169, 274, 277,
281, 326
IV/168, 180, 181, 183–85, 194, 213,
215, 259, 261, 270, 271, 288, 318, 326,
333–35
- PROVIDENTIA; PROVIDERE
voorzienigheid; voorzien
providence; to provide for
III/10, 20, 38, 68, 78, 81, 82, 84,
86–89, 103, 135, 144, 165, 194, 205,
213, 231, 235, 295, 341
IV/168, 218, 289, 297
- PROXIMUS (AS A NOUN); PROXIMUS (ADJ.)
naaste; naast
neighbor, relative; proximate, related
III/46, 58, 71, 91, 102, 104, 165, 168,
174, 175, 198, 232, 233, 306, 309, 324, 359
IV/290
- PRUDENTIA; PRUDENS; PRUDENTER;
IMPRUDENTER
wijsheid, voorzichtigheid; wijs, wijs en
voorzichtig; voorzichtigelijk
wisdom, prudence; wise, prudent; pru-
dently; imprudently
III/8, 22, 26, 29, 45, 47, 66–68, 141,
150, 205, 223, 295–97, 307, 344, 353, 357
IV/166
- PUBLICUS; PUBLICE
gemeen; opentlijk
public, generally recognized; publicly
III/7, 8, 116, 117, 137, 138, 146, 151,
188, 197, 203, 223, 225, 232, 233, 236,
246, 274, 275, 288, 292, 300, 301, 303,
307, 308, 312, 316, 328, 330, 331, 334,
335, 339, 345, 346, 350, 357, 359
IV/164, 212, 217, 218, 235, 236, 289,
292
- PURIFICATIO; PURUS; IMPURUS; IMPURARE
zuivering; rein; onzuiver; verontreinigen
purification; pure, uncontaminated, sim-
ple; unclean, impure; to defile
III/18, 25, 29, 49, 61, 64, 69, 93, 98,
145, 149, 153, 160, 217–19, 229, 231, 233
IV/189, 288
- QUAESTIO
geschil, zaak, kwestie, onderzoek
question, problem, dispute, investigation,
inquiry
III/11, 44, 77, 95, 154, 175, 225, 227,
236, 272, 288, 290, 292, 302–4, 316, 317,
333, 334, 339–41, 348, 350
IV/169, 181, 187, 190, 193, 198,
259–61, 263, 279, 336

RABINUS

rabbijn

rabbi

III/34, 41, 105, 119, 132, 134, 138,
142, 144, 150, 182, 210

RATIO; RATIOCINIUM; RATIONALIS; RATIOCI-
NARI; SECUNDUM RATIONEM; IRRATIONALIS
reden; redenering; redelijk; redeneren;
volgens de reden; onredelijk
reason, reasoning, argument, relation,
principle, nature, purpose, account, con-
sideration of, attention to, ratio, pro-
portion; reasoning; rational; to reason;
rationally; irrational

III/5–8, 10, 12, 18, 25, 29, 30, 34,
36, 38, 40, 41, 43, 45, 47, 50, 53, 54,
59, 62, 64, 67, 69, 73, 77, 80, 83, 87,
88, 91, 97, 98, 100, 101, 104, 106, 111,
113–16, 118, 120, 124, 128, 134, 136–40,
142, 150, 152, 153, 156–59, 165, 170,
174–76, 178–96, 198, 202, 203, 210, 214,
215, 217, 222, 223, 226, 229, 231, 232,
234, 239–46, 274, 275, 277–80, 282, 283,
285, 286, 288, 291–93, 295–97, 303, 304,
306–8, 315, 318, 319, 322, 326, 328, 330,
333, 339, 340, 341, 347, 350, 351, 354,
357, 359

IV/167, 170–72, 177, 180, 186, 187,
197, 205, 208–10, 213–15, 218, 220, 221,
225, 228, 244, 245, 247, 248, 250–53,
256, 257, 259, 260, 262–64, 267, 268,
276, 278, 281–83, 287, 293, 297–99, 302,
304, 310, 316, 317, 319, 320, 322–25,
327, 333, 335

dictamen (sanae) rationis; documenta
(verae) rationis; ratio dictare
dictate of (sound) reason; teachings of
(true) reason; reason dictates

III/73, 80, 101, 190, 191, 194, 198,
229–31, 241, 242, 276, 279, 283, 286,
287, 291, 293, 327

IV/303

documenta (verae) rationis; ratio
docet; ratione dirigitur
teachings of (true) reason; reason
teaches; directed by reason

III/70, 183, 203, 215, 229–31, 275,
276, 283, 286, 287, 291, 295, 315

IV/297

ductu (sanae) rationis; ratione duci
guidance of (sound) reason; to be led
or guided by reason

III/80, 188, 190, 192–95, 198, 202,
274, 275, 277, 278, 280, 282, 283,
286, 287, 291, 294, 297, 308

IV/165

ex (nostrae) rationis praescripto; con-
tra sua rationis praescriptum
according to the prescription of (our)
reason; contrary to the prescription
of one's reason

III/275, 277–79, 283, 286, 295, 298

leges humanae rationis; principia suae
rationis
laws of human reason; principles of
his own reason

III/190, 191, 229, 279, 286

IV/210

ratio (bene)vivendi
(reden en) regel, middel van (wel)
te leven
principle (or way) of living (well)

III/41, 46, 59, 60, 69

sana ratio

sound reason

III/7, 73, 80, 83, 190, 195, 198,
240, 241, 283, 286, 287, 291

usus rationis; ratione (recte) utendi
the use of reason; using reason (rightly)

III/182, 191, 198, 241, 278–80

IV/319, 323

RATIO MOTUS AD QUIETEM

reden van beweging en rust

ratio of motion to rest

IV/173, 177

RATUS; IRRITUS

bondig; krachteloos

valid; null and void, ineffective

GLOSSARY-INDEX

III/161, 169, 191, 192, 205, 280, 288,
304, 308, 310, 311, 318, 335, 340, 342, 348

REALITAS; REALIS; REVERA, REALITER
zakelijkheid; zakelijk, dadelijk, in der
daad, zakelijk ding; waarlijk
reality; real; really

III/19, 20, 92, 93, 162, 206, 281
IV/275, 335

REGIMEN; RECTOR; REGINA; REGENS; REGIA
bestiering; bestierder; koningin; besti-
erder; raadhuis

regime, government, control; ruler, gov-
ernor; queen; regent; court

III/7, 23, 64, 145, 208, 331–33, 341,
351, 352, 356, 359

IV/276, 286, 292, 293, 296

REGULA; REGULARIS

regel; regelmatig

rule; regular

III/9, 83, 96, 99, 102, 107, 137, 138,
175, 181, 182, 184, 189, 190, 274, 292,
293, 323

IV/263, 264, 295

regulae motus

rules of motion

III/102

IV/166, 167, 174, 177

RELIGIO; RELIGIOSE

Godsdienst; godsdienstelijk

religion, religious scruple, religious duty;
in a religious manner, scrupulously

III/5–8, 11, 16, 49, 50, 55–57, 75, 76,
92, 96, 97, 116–18, 123, 124, 140, 141, 146,
153–60, 163–67, 182, 189, 197–200, 206,
209, 210, 213, 217, 218, 220–23, 225, 226,
228–33, 235–38, 246, 247, 274, 275, 283,
288, 289, 291, 307, 317, 319, 345

IV/168, 207, 212–14, 216, 217, 218,
220, 221, 228, 235, 236, 272, 273, 287,
288, 297, 299, 307, 309, 310, 313, 315,
318, 320

Religio catholica, universalis

Catholic religion, universal religion

III/10, 116, 162, 163, 231, 345

IV/225

religio vera

true religion

III/6, 67, 155, 158, 159, 162, 163,
186, 230, 289

IV/272

REPRAESENTATIO; REPRÆSENTAMEN;
REPRÆSENTARE

verschijning, vertoning; vertoning;
vertonen

representation; representation; to
represent

III/20, 32, 34, 35, 62, 92, 93, 105, 153

IV/233, 279, 284

REPUGNANTIA; REPUGNARE

tegenstrevig; tegen ... strijden

contradiction, incoherence, conflict; to
be inconsistent with, to be contrary to

III/7, 10, 12, 38, 40, 41, 54, 57, 72,
83–87, 91, 94–98, 100, 101, 113–15, 139,
140, 150, 159, 170, 179, 181–85, 188,
191, 193, 198, 199, 202, 241, 242, 247,
286, 291, 307, 327, 330, 342

IV/181, 212, 259, 281, 283, 286, 287,
294, 295, 297, 315, 323

RESPUBLICA (SOMETIMES: RES PUBLICA)

gemene staat (sometimes one word),
gemenebest

republic, public affairs

III/3, 7, 11, 59, 60, 70–73, 103, 104,
116, 117, 173, 179, 187, 189, 192, 194,
195, 197, 218, 221, 225, 226, 228, 229,
232, 233, 235, 236, 239–47, 273, 282,
284, 289, 292, 295, 302, 321, 324,
328, 332, 333, 337–39, 346, 352, 354,
356–58

IV/166, 167, 212, 213, 215–18, 228

Respublica (imperium, societas,
natio) Hebraeorum, Judaeorum,
Israeliticorum

Hebrew republic (state, social order,
nation)

III/10, 11, 48, 50, 69, 72–76, 122,
126, 128, 133, 134, 201, 206, 220–22,
230, 238

IV/213, 214, 296

- Respublica optima, bona
best, good, republic
III/60, 104, 189, 243
- Respublica (imperium) Romanum,
Romanorum
Republic (empire, state) of the
Romans
III/166, 204, 357
- REVELATIO; REVELARE
openbaring; openbaren
revelation; reveal
III/9–11, 15–21, 23, 26–28, 30–40, 42,
43, 48, 49, 51–54, 61, 63–65, 69, 77, 79,
80, 88, 89, 95, 96, 98, 99, 104, 105, 118,
124, 143, 151–56, 160, 167–69, 171, 179,
184–86, 188, 198–200, 203, 205–7, 213,
221, 229, 230, 233, 238, 283
IV/209, 218, 223, 225, 284, 304, 307,
309, 314
- REX; REGNUM; REGERE; REGNARE; REGIUS
koning; heerschappij, rijk, koninkrijk;
bestieren, besluiten; heersen; koninglijk
king; kingdom, reign, domain, throne,
rule, realm; to govern, rule, manage; to
reign, control, rule; royal, kingly
III/5, 6, 10, 12, 32–34, 36, 39, 41, 43,
45, 48, 49, 56, 64, 65, 72, 74, 76, 81, 92,
93, 96, 120, 122, 125, 126, 132–34, 136,
138, 141–46, 154, 166, 171, 172, 177,
182, 187, 188, 195, 200–209, 211, 212,
216, 219–28, 230–32, 234–38, 245, 246,
273, 295, 298–304, 306–10, 312–25, 329,
331, 332, 336–38, 342, 344, 346, 348,
352–54, 358, 360
IV/168, 174, 177, 188, 213, 285–87,
291, 308, 325, 327
- regnum caeleste, caelorum, dei,
divinum
koninkrijke Gods, koninkrijk der
hemelen
kingdom of heaven, of God
III/65, 72, 103, 206, 214, 222, 229,
230, 231
- RISUS; RIDERE, IRRIDERE; RIDICULUS
gelach; belachen; belachelijk
laughter, ridicule; to laugh at, mock,
ridicule; mocker; ridiculous
III/11, 19, 36, 53, 86, 114, 146, 148,
150, 177, 188, 191, 204, 273, 274, 279,
293, 319
IV/166, 196, 251, 254, 258, 260, 285,
290, 302, 335
- SACERDOS
priester
minister, priest
III/114, 123, 143, 145, 204, 218, 221,
223, 238, 345
IV/295, 317
- SAECULUM
eeuw
age, generation, period, century
III/95, 102, 121–23, 125, 126, 133,
163, 235, 273, 275, 289
IV/284, 286, 288, 291, 295, 297
- SAEVITIA; SAEVUS
wreedheid; wreed
cruelty, savagery; savage
III/7, 9, 26, 225, 323
IV/216, 284, 286, 288, 291, 295, 297
- SALUS; SALVARI; SALVATOR; SALUTARIS;
SALVUS
welstand, heil en welstand, vrijheid,
zaligheid, behoudenis; zalig worden;
verlosser, zaligmaker; heilzaam, gezond;
zalig
salvation, well-being, safety, survival; to
be saved; savior; salutary; saved
III/7, 8, 21, 24, 45, 51, 62, 79, 80, 96,
97, 111, 115, 147, 155, 157, 160, 165,
166, 169, 175, 177–79, 185, 188, 197,
198, 205, 244, 247, 275, 290, 297, 313,
317, 334, 345
IV/215, 222, 224, 226, 281, 289, 291,
312
- salus communis; salus publica, populi;
salus imperii; communis subditorum
salus; multitudinis salus; salus reipu-
blica; salus patriae

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- general welfare; public well-being; well-being of the people; well-being of the state; common well-being of the subjects; well-being of the multitude; well-being of the state
 III/7, 12, 194, 197, 218, 232, 247, 275, 290, 291, 294, 298, 299, 308–10, 312, 332, 344, 346, 354, 359
- via salutis, ad salutem; ad salutem necessaria
 de weg der zaligheid; ter zaligheid noodzakelijk
 the way to salvation; necessary for salvation
 III/21, 188, 199
 IV/308
- SANCTITAS, SANCTIMONIA; SANCTUS
 heiligheid; heilig
 holiness; holy, sacred, saint
 III/20, 24–28, 55, 66, 76, 159–61, 197, 214, 219, 273, 322
 IV/209, 210, 213, 216, 262, 282, 283, 285, 288–91, 297, 298, 308, 313, 314, 318
- SANTAS; SANARE; SANUS; SANO CORPORE
 gezondheid; genezen; gezond
 health; to heal; healthy, sensible, sound, sane; healthily
 III/7, 41, 47, 61, 62, 71, 73, 80, 82, 83, 87, 90, 91, 122, 125, 136, 148, 149, 155, 187, 189, 190, 195, 198, 240, 241, 244, 278, 282, 283, 286, 287, 291, 311, 320
 IV/164, 166, 177, 260, 263, 290, 320, 326, 327, 329, 330
- mens sana in corpore sano
 sound mind in a sound body
 III/71, 278
 IV/327, 329
- SAPIENTIA; SAPERE; SAPIENS; SAPIENTER
 wijsheid; verstand hebben, wijs zijn, wezen; wijs; wijselijk
 wisdom; to know, be wise; wise; wisely
 III/5, 21, 22, 24, 29, 44, 45, 59, 66–68, 72, 75, 77, 93, 141, 152, 170, 184, 187, 190, 205, 224, 243, 273, 277–79, 282, 291, 296, 299, 322, 336, 356, 360
 IV/228, 229, 235, 236, 244, 248, 258, 283, 289, 290, 294, 298, 307, 308, 315, 329, 330
- SCELUS; SCELESTUS
 schelmstuk, misdrijf; schelm, gruwelijk, boos
 crime, wickedness; wicked, criminal
 III/7, 97, 171, 173, 179, 180, 182, 185, 197, 203, 244, 245, 300, 314, 316, 329, 354
 IV/281, 319, 320, 323
- SCIENTIA; SCIRE; NESCIRE; INSCITIA; INSCIUS
 wetenschap; weten; niet weten; onwetenschap, onkunde, dwaasheid; onkundig
 'knowledge, science; to know, learn; not to know; sheer stupidity; not know(ing), ignorant of
 III/5, 10, 12, 16, 22, 23, 26–30, 33, 35, 37, 38, 45, 52, 62, 67, 68, 72, 73, 79–81, 84, 85, 87–89, 92, 93, 95, 98, 100–103, 105, 108–11, 113–15, 126, 135, 137, 139, 140, 144, 150, 157, 159, 163, 167, 168, 170–73, 176, 177, 180, 185, 187, 195, 197, 203, 211, 223, 226, 233, 238, 241, 243, 247, 273–75, 278, 291, 292, 302, 310, 320, 321, 323, 327, 346
 IV/171, 260, 266, 268–71, 281, 282, 285, 290, 291, 293, 297, 299, 302, 305, 310, 311, 319, 320
- SCRIPTOR; SCRIBERE; SCRIPTUM
 schrijver; schrijven; geschrift
 writer; to write; text, written text, a writing
 III/7, 12, 16, 33–35, 37, 42, 43, 51, 54, 64, 66, 77, 84, 91–93, 96, 99, 100–111, 114, 117–29, 131, 134–51, 153, 155, 159, 160, 162–65, 170, 172–74, 179, 180, 182, 186, 221, 223, 244, 246, 273, 274, 319, 338
 IV/175, 177, 207, 216, 220, 234, 241, 263, 267, 280, 281, 282, 288, 293, 300, 301–3, 305, 311, 315, 317, 321, 335

SCRIPTURA; (LITERAE) SACRAE; SACRA
PAGINA

Schrift; (Heilige) Schrift; de Heilige
bladen

Scripture; Sacred Texts; Holy Scripture
III/9, 10, 15–21, 24–29, 31, 33, 35–37,
42–45, 47, 48, 50, 53–55, 62–64, 68, 69,
71, 73, 76–80, 82, 84, 87–96, 97, 98–120,
123, 124, 127, 129, 132–39, 141, 145–50,
152, 155–74, 176, 177, 179–88, 210, 211,
219, 222–24, 246, 291, 318

IV/166, 167, 209, 210, 215, 218, 225,
228, 282, 296, 298, 300, 309, 310, 324,
327, 328, 330

SECURITAS; SECURUS

veiligheid, zekerheid, verzekerdheid,
gerustheid; veilig

security; secure

III/9, 46–48, 71, 73, 94, 98, 116,
156, 191, 200, 203–5, 211, 218, 220,
224, 232, 236, 241, 275, 281, 285, 289,
295, 299, 308, 313–16, 322, 326, 329,
332, 349

IV/234, 284, 288, 289, 292, 293,
295

SEDITION; SEDITIOSUS; SEDITIOSE

beroerte; oproerig; oproeriglijk
rebellion; rebellious, seditious, turbulent;
seditiously

III/7, 9, 201, 219, 227, 231, 234, 236,
237, 241, 242, 244–46, 295–98, 307, 309,
313, 326, 327, 355

SENATUS; SENATOR; SENATORIUS

staatsraad, raad; staatsraad; staatsradelijk
senate, assembly of elders; senator;
senatorial

III/124, 332, 333, 335–41, 343–45,
348–53, 355, 358

IV/313

SENSATIO; SENSUS

gevoel; zin, (zin en) mening

sensation; meaning, sense (= meaning or
sense organ), faculty of judgment (rar.)

III/9, 16, 21–25, 61, 76, 77, 92, 93,
100–102, 104–9, 111–17, 119, 122, 126,
131, 136, 137, 140, 148, 164, 165, 170,

180–82, 185, 210, 239, 275, 283, 287,
293, 302

IV/183, 184, 185, 207, 210, 214

SENTENTIA; SENTIRE

mening, zin en mening; gevoelen, achten,
oordelen

opinion, sentence, meaning, statement,
sentiment, judgment, view; to think, (w.
cum) agree (with)

III/8, 12, 18, 27, 35–38, 41–43,
64, 66, 67, 72, 73, 79–81, 87, 96, 97,
100, 101, 104, 112–15, 117, 118, 120,
127, 129, 131, 151, 153, 155, 158, 171,
173–76, 180, 181, 184, 185, 189, 227,
235, 239–43, 245–47, 280, 281, 287,
290, 301, 302, 304, 305, 310–12, 321,
322, 334, 335, 338, 340–43, 345, 348,
351, 355

IV/166, 169, 173, 174, 181, 202, 208,
210, 214, 225, 241, 246, 251

SERVITUS; SERVITIUM; SERVUS; SERVIRE;
SERVILIS; SERVILITER

dienstbaarheid; dienstbaarheid; knecht,
slaaf of dienaar; dienen, dienstbar zijn,
ten dienste te zijn, dienen; dienstbaar;
slaafelijk

bondage; slavery; servant, slave; to serve,
to be a slave, be subject to; menial, ser-
vile; like a slave

III/7, 23, 25, 41, 54, 59, 62, 65, 66,
74, 75, 89, 121, 123, 131, 132, 138, 194,
195, 205, 216, 226, 231, 283, 296, 298,
300, 308, 310, 312, 315, 317, 319–22,
326, 328, 330, 355, 356, 359

IV/168, 221, 233, 289, 295, 303, 305

SIGNUM; SIGNIFICATIO; SIGNIFICARE

teken; betekenis; beteken, bekend maken,
kennen te geven

sign; meaning; to tell, signify, mean

III/21–27, 30–32, 36, 38, 43, 45, 56,
57, 66, 67, 69, 75, 76, 84, 87, 88, 91, 93,
94, 100, 101, 105–, 119, 120, 135–40,
145, 151, 153–56, 160, 162, 165, 169,
186, 193, 198, 199, 208, 213, 216, 219,
300, 334, 349, 356

IV/166, 168, 178, 185, 225, 249, 267,
272, 274, 278, 280, 285, 286, 294, 295,
299, 301, 304, 318

GLOSSARY-INDEX

SIMPLICITAS; SIMPLEX

eenvoudigheid, oprechtigheid; enkel, enkel, enkele, eenvoudig
simplicity; simple

III/10, 30, 36, 66, 91, 92, 111, 116, 126, 129–31, 148, 155, 156, 158, 164, 167–70, 172, 174, 176, 179, 188, 193, 204, 215, 241, 243, 345

IV/181, 183, 184, 190, 210, 224, 230, 266, 283, 335

SINGULARIS; SINGULARITAS

bijzonder, zonderling; bijzonderheid
particular, special, singular, unique, peculiar; particularity

III/6, 10, 22, 27, 28, 37–39, 42, 46, 48, 49, 53, 54, 61, 72, 79, 135, 138, 139, 154, 155, 157, 162, 163, 167–69, 177, 188, 200, 205, 210, 214–17, 228, 229, 231, 233, 234, 238, 291, 292, 303, 307, 321, 327, 341, 342, 344, 345, 356, 357

IV/211, 213, 217, 265, 266, 278, 279, 280, 300, 314, 322

SOCIETAS; SOCIARE; SOCIALIS

gezelligheid, gemeente, menigte, gemene Staat, gemeenschap; verenigen, samenvoegen; gezellig
social order, society, alliance; unite, combine with; social

III/47, 48, 50, 64, 69, 72–74, 76, 193, 195, 205, 271, 273, 274, 281, 297, 317, 318, 347

IV/164, 174, 177, 215, 287–89, 296–98, 335

SOMNIUM, INSOMNIUM; SOMNIARE

droom; dromen

dream; to dream (up), dream of, indulge in idle fancies

III/5, 9, 16, 18–20, 24, 33, 34, 36, 47, 98, 129, 132, 134, 168, 180, 184, 275

IV/175, 245, 253, 254, 267, 286, 287, 319, 320

SPECIES; SPECIOSUS

gedaante; schoon

species, appearance, air of plausibility; specious

III/7, 15, 57, 137, 204, 323, 326, 342

IV/208, 209, 215, 216, 257, 261, 297, 333

specie + gen [juris, pietatis, religionis]
onder schijn van [recht, godvreuchtigheid, Godsdienst]
under the pretext of, under the guise of, with an appearance of [right, piety, religion]

III/6, 7, 12, 118, 178, 196, 212, 225, 227, 285

SPECULATIO; SPECULATIVUS

bespiegeling, beschouwing; beschouwige speculation, contemplation; speculative

III/7, 9, 35, 42, 45, 61, 77, 89, 104, 109, 158, 166–68, 188, 225, 237, 246, 306
IV/260

SPES; SPERARE

hoop; hopen

hope; to hope

III/5, 6, 74, 88, 191–93, 196, 202, 244, 280, 285, 288, 290, 296, 297, 312
IV/209, 222, 223, 236, 312, 317

SPIRITUS; SPIRITUALIA, RES SPIRITUALES

geest; geestelijke dingen

spirit, breath; spiritual things, spiritual matters

III/3, 10, 21, 22, 25, 27–29, 42, 56, 77, 153, 178, 188, 233, 289

IV/281, 284, 294, 295, 298, 319, 320, 323, 329

Spiritus Christi; Christum secundum Spiritum noscere

Spirit of Christ; to know Christ according to the Spirit

III/79, 178

IV/293, 309, 318, 320

Spiritus Dei, Jehovahae

Spirit of God, of Yahweh

III/21, 24–28, 43, 155, 162, 176, 221

Spiritus Sanctus

Holy Spirit

III/27, 28, 88, 97, 98, 102, 103, 105, 155, 158, 187, 188

IV/285, 288, 289, 291, 308, 318

LATIN-DUTCH-ENGLISH INDEX

STABILIRE; STABILIS

bevestigen; (vast en) bestendig
to stabilize, establish (firmly); stable
III/49, 54, 65, 69, 73, 88, 235, 275,
296, 299, 307–9, 311, 322, 324, 327, 333,
334, 353, 354
IV/214, 235, 236, 239, 245, 272, 282,
284, 288, 293

STATUS

stand, staat
state, condition, situation, order,
constitution

III/20, 88, 189, 196, 198, 227, 285,
290, 291, 293, 295, 302, 303, 308, 316–
18, 332, 334, 335, 341, 338, 344, 352
IV/172, 174, 216, 263, 292, 294, 296, 308

status civilis

civil state, order, arrangement
III/192, 196, 198, 276, 284, 285–
88, 293, 295, 297, 312, 316, 318

status naturalis

state of nature, natural condition
III/192, 195, 198, 205, 229, 245,
281–83, 285–90, 294, 295, 302, 315,
316

IV/239

STUDIUM; STUDERE

(vlijt en) naarstigheid, verlangen;
trachten, zoeken, z. benaastigen
zeal, devotion, concern; to be eager to,
be concerned to, concentrate on, desire
III/6, 7, 12, 29, 41, 43, 44, 54, 75,
81, 88, 91, 97, 98, 101, 102, 111, 114,
127, 128, 149, 159, 166, 172, 174, 176,
181, 187, 212, 225, 226, 235, 241, 246,
274, 296, 299, 304, 310–12, 320, 329,
334, 335, 337, 343–45, 351, 353–56, 359
IV/164, 168, 177, 208, 210, 212–16,
218, 230, 236, 249, 254, 260, 265, 272,
290, 292, 295, 296, 300, 303, 330

sine (absque) partium studio
impartially, without favoritism
III/122, 304, 342

STULTITIA; STULTUS; STULTE

dwaasheid; dwaas
folly, foolishness; fool, foolish; foolishly

III/5, 28, 41, 47, 66, 68, 82, 131, 135,
182, 185, 192, 197, 287, 290, 298
IV/198, 220, 244, 246, 249, 256, 258,
286, 289, 290

SUBDITUS; SUBJICERE (ALSO SUBICERE)

onderdaan, onderzaat; onderwerpen,
stellen, staan (onder)
subject (political); to submit, subject
(politically), make liable to
III/11, 12, 162, 166, 194–98, 200–205,
207, 210, 212, 216, 220, 221, 233, 237,
239, 240, 242, 284, 285–89, 291, 292,
295, 296, 299, 302, 308, 309, 314, 322,
324, 327, 328, 335, 337, 338, 345, 349,
350, 352, 356
IV/165, 211, 212, 217, 218, 221, 239,
284, 311

SUBSISTERE

bestaan
to subsist, stand firm, continue in exis-
tence, survive; make a stand
III/48, 74, 116, 201, 320, 346
IV/181, 185, 186, 216

SUBSTANTIA; SUBSTANTIVUS

zelfstandigheid, wezen, einde; zelfstandig
substance; substantive
III/22, 42, 43, 169
IV/173, 247, 257, 261

SUFFRAGIUM; SUFFRAGIUM FERRE

stemmen, toestemming; stemmen geven
vote; to vote
III/205, 242, 245, 303–5, 309–12,
315, 316, 321, 325, 328, 332, 334, 335,
338–44, 350, 351, 355, 358, 359
IV/259

SUPERSTITIO; SUPERSTITIOSUS; SUPERSTITIOSE

waangeloof, waangelovigheid, bij-
geloof, bijgelovigheid; bijgelovig;
waangelooftijk
superstition; superstitious; superstitiously
III/5–7, 10, 12, 29, 41, 53, 97, 129,
137, 139, 141, 158, 159, 165, 199, 215,
222, 223, 242, 345
IV/207, 213, 220, 253, 307, 308, 318,
321–23

GLOSSARY-INDEX

SUPPLICIUM

straffing, straf
punishment

III/32, 38, 41, 48, 60, 61, 66, 68, 74,
75, 77, 193, 215, 218, 230, 245, 331,
334, 353

IV/220, 223, 287

SUSPICIO; SUSPICARI; SUSPECTUS

bedenken, vermoeden; vermoeden,
menen; verdacht

suspicion; to suspect, suppose, think;
suspicious, suspected

III/17, 18, 87, 91, 105, 126, 127, 132,
141, 143–45, 149, 161, 205, 218, 227

IV/260, 292, 299

SYNDICUS

Wetverdediger

Syndic

III/332–45, 350, 354, 355

TEMPLUM

tempel, kerk

temple, house of worship

III/8, 23, 34, 49, 56, 120, 132, 145,
146, 150, 160, 161, 163, 204, 209, 210,
211, 217, 219, 220, 224, 234, 238, 275,
307, 345

IV/316

secundum templum

second temple

III/141, 145

TEMPUS; TEMPORANEUS

tijd; gedurig, tijdelijk

time, tense, date, then; enduring, tem-
poral, for a time

III/6, 10, 23, 26, 29, 35, 36, 38, 48–50,
54–57, 69, 70, 72, 73, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84,
87, 88, 92, 93, 95, 101–4, 106, 107, 109,
110, 112, 117, 119–28, 130, 131, 134,
136, 137, 139–46, 154, 157–61, 163, 170,
182, 213, 216, 218–20, 223, 224, 228,
231, 232, 238, 295, 300–306, 309, 313,
315, 316, 322, 330–33, 335–41, 344, 346,
348, 350, 352–54

IV/164, 165, 178, 185, 203–7, 214–
16, 227, 233, 241, 242, 255, 260, 272,

273, 276, 279, 286–88, 290, 295, 296,
299, 300, 302, 305, 317, 318, 322, 330,
335

TENERE

houden

to hold, have, grip, bind, possess

III/5, 8, 10, 11, 29, 35, 36, 39, 42, 43,
45, 48, 72–77, 79, 92, 93, 97, 104, 108,
140, 145, 150, 154, 168–72, 174, 177–84,
186, 190, 192–200, 202–6, 209, 210, 212,
214–18, 220, 221, 223, 224, 226, 228,
229, 231–39, 244, 247, 274, 280, 282–84,
286, 288, 291, 293, 294, 299, 308, 312,
318, 323–25, 330, 333, 336, 338–41,
345–47, 349, 350, 352, 358, 359

IV/217, 225, 239, 242, 247, 260, 261,
265, 293, 300, 302, 330

TESTIMONIUM; TESTARI

voorbeeld, getuigenis; getuigen

testimony, evidence; to testify, be a
witness

III/16, 27, 31, 37, 38, 40, 45, 49, 50,
52, 55, 69, 70, 75, 76, 87, 88, 97, 99, 108,
114–16, 121, 122, 124, 125, 127, 141–43,
145, 151, 154, 155, 170, 187, 188, 199,
202, 204, 210, 212, 214, 215, 217, 219,
223, 238, 287, 336

IV/187, 213, 214, 245, 248, 249,
254, 258, 264, 282, 284–86, 295, 303,
320, 321

THEOCRATIA; THEOCRATICUS

Godsbestiering; Godbestierlijke

theocracy; theocratic

III/206, 208, 211, 319

THEOLOGIA; THEOLOGUS; THEOLOGASTRI; THEOLOGICUS; THEOLOGIZARE

Godgeleerdheid; Godgeleerde; bijloper;
Godgeleerd; —

theology; theologian; foolish theolo-
gians; theological; theologize

III/12, 44, 69, 95, 97, 98, 115, 118,
172, 179, 180, 184, 185, 187–89, 212,
218, 237, 274, 278

IV/165, 166, 210, 224, 242, 262, 272,
281, 299, 302

THEORIA; THEORETICUS

bespiegeling; beschouwig, in bespiegling, beschouwer

theory; theoretical, theorist

III/201, 237, 273, 326

IV/167

TIMOR; TIMERE; TIMIDUS

vrees; vrezen; vreesachtig

fear; to fear, be afraid of; timid

III/5, 6, 8, 26, 59, 60, 66, 67, 72, 137, 182, 186, 188, 192–94, 196, 201, 202, 204, 213, 217, 219, 234, 245, 281, 288, 289, 291, 295, 297, 299, 306, 311, 314, 355, 357

IV/221, 222, 236, 251, 266, 268, 312, 326, 352, 357

TOLERANTIA; TOLERARE; TOLERABILIS; INTOLERABILIS, INTOLERANDA

lijdzaamheid; verdragen, uitstaan; verdragelijk, verstaanbaar; onverdragelijk endurance; to undergo, submit to, endure, bear; acceptable, bearable, intelligible; intolerable

III/104, 118, 137, 140, 159, 200, 205, 215, 216, 223, 245, 316

IV/215, 319

TOTUS

geheel

whole

III/5, 26, 47, 189, 191, 231, 277, 279, 284, 287

IV/166, 167, 169–74, 176, 184, 208, 212, 257, 260, 278

TRADITIO; TRADERE

overlevering; overleveren, overgeven, onderwijzen

tradition; to hand down, over, tell of, deliver, impart, give (over), pass on, entrust

III/16, 21, 23, 34, 40, 41, 93, 105, 116–18, 121–23, 140–44, 146–48, 150, 152, 159, 166, 167, 182, 218, 222, 223, 302, 303, 306, 318

IV/213, 215, 218, 269, 272, 273, 282, 288, 289, 296, 301, 307, 319, 321, 324, 330

TRANQUILLITAS; TRANQUILLITAS ANIMI

gerustheid; gerustheid des gemoeds

peace, tranquillity; peace of mind

III/44, 47, 67–71, 88, 242, 243, 283, 285, 288

IV/218, 236, 281, 289, 325

TRANSFERRE

opdragen

to transfer, translate, transform, transcribe

III/11, 24, 123, 142, 144, 299

IV/172, 294

jus (jura) transferre, (summam) potestatem, imperium transferre
to transfer a right (rights), power (sovereignty)

III/193, 195–98, 200, 201, 205–7, 214, 220–22, 229, 230, 239, 242, 285, 294, 298, 299, 308, 309, 310, 313, 314, 317, 319, 325, 328, 331

TRISTITIA; CONTRISTARI; TRISTIS

droefheid; bedroefd werden; bedroefd

sadness; to become sad; sad, gloomy

III/6, 25, 32, 33, 91, 284

IV/301

TURBA; TURBARE

menigte, verwarring; ontroeren

crowd, turmoil, confusion; to disturb,

agitate, dismay, throw into confusion (pass.) to be in disarray

III/36, 98, 146, 320

IV/166, 216, 255, 258, 274, 292

TURPITUDO; TURPIS

lelijkheid; schandelijk

shamelessness; shameful

III/7, 166, 244, 245, 312, 319, 320, 359

IV/290, 323

TUTELA; TUERI, TUTARI; TUTUS; TUTO

beschutting en bescherming, voogdij-schap; in veiligheid te houden; veilig; veiliglijk

protection, guardianship; to protect, defend; safe; safely

III/12, 57, 59, 193, 199, 204, 205, 214, 222, 226, 238, 239, 241, 247, 287, 288, 297, 302, 314, 315, 317, 320, 337, 344, 354, 359

IV/167, 175, 217, 218, 273, 298, 304

GLOSSARY-INDEX

TYRANNUS
dwingeland
tyrant

III/200, 202, 212, 220, 226–28, 233,
273, 296, 297, 317, 320, 328

IV/336

UNIVERSUM (N. S. NOUN); UNIVERSUS
(ADJ.); UNIVERSALIS; UNIVERSALITER
het Heelal; algemeen; geheel, algemeen;
in het algemeen
the universe; whole; universal, general;
universally

III/10, 15, 43, 44, 57, 61, 69, 73, 88,
102–4, 162, 165, 173, 176, 177, 181, 184,
185, 189, 191, 193, 199, 209, 210, 212,
214, 218, 219, 229, 230, 234, 277, 279,
284, 291, 331, 338, 350–52, 355, 356

IV/171, 173, 184, 190, 208, 211, 212,
223, 230, 240, 246, 252, 253, 257, 263,
282, 289, 291, 294

USURPARE; USURPATOR

gebruiken, trekken (een recht aan zich);
een die 't hoogste recht aan zich trekt
to use, take (for o.s.), usurp (power,
rights); usurper

III/15, 21, 22, 25, 26, 107, 138, 169,
204, 206, 207, 213, 215, 221, 228, 239,
247

IV/167

USUS
gebruik

use, usage, (habitual) practice, perfor-
mance, advantage, practical application

III/9, 69, 136–39, 151, 160, 191, 215,
221, 222, 226, 231, 237, 273, 274

communis usus, usus linguae

ordinary usage, linguistic usage

III/100, 101, 106, 109, 138, 140, 164

usus vitae

gebruik des levens (van het leven)

the practice of life, how to conduct
our lives, the conduct of life, practi-
cal purposes

III/9, 16, 42, 58, 103, 104, 108

UTILITAS; UTI; UTILIS; INUTILIS

nuttigheid; gebruiken; nut(tig); onnut

utility, advantage, good; to use; advantage
(neuter as a noun), useful, advantageous
(as an adj.); useless, of no use

III/7, 12, 22, 31, 46, 54, 59, 70, 73,
74, 79, 98, 102, 104, 112, 116, 141, 187,
188, 190–92, 194–97, 199, 204, 205, 215,
221, 229, 232, 233, 235–37, 240, 244,
246, 279, 280, 285, 287, 288, 290, 297,
308–10, 312, 315, 321, 332, 336, 339,
352, 356

IV/168, 186, 204, 228, 262, 281, 290,
298, 299, 303, 323, 335

VACATIO; VACARE

bezigheid; bezig zijn voor

service; to have time for, give time to,
find time for, devote o.s. to

III/114, 237, 301, 303, 308, 316, 317,
332

IV/233, 236, 273, 274

VENDICARE (W. SIBI, UT SUUM)

beschermen (voor zich zelf), aan zich
eigen maken, bewaren (voor zich)

to claim (for o.s.)

III/281, 284, 315, 326

VERBUM

woord

word, verb, term

III/8, 15–18, 20, 21, 28, 34, 35, 42,
43, 64, 102, 105–7, 128, 129, 137–40,
143, 145, 147, 150, 151, 160, 162, 165,
170, 173, 175, 176, 181, 182, 217, 223,
231, 234, 240, 280, 285, 322

IV/183, 210, 215, 261, 262, 283, 284,
293, 295, 297, 302, 310, 315

verbum Dei

word of God, God's word

III/10, 17, 89, 97, 143, 158, 159,
160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 182, 185,
186, 236

IV/218, 282, 283, 288, 294, 321,
323, 331

VERITAS; VERACITAS; VERUS; VERAX

waarheid; waarachtigheid; waar,
waarachtig; waarachtig
truth; honesty; true (usu.), proper (rar.);
true

III/8, 9, 17, 18, 20, 28–31, 36,
41–45, 48–50, 52–54, 56–59, 62, 64–70,
72, 73, 78–80, 82, 84, 87, 88, 97–100,
103, 105–7, 109–12, 114–16, 118–20,
129, 134, 137–39, 142–44, 148, 155–59,
161–63, 167, 170–79, 181–98, 204, 207,
212, 220, 222, 229, 230, 236, 239, 243,
244, 246, 275, 279, 288, 289, 296, 308,
316, 320

IV/166, 179, 180, 188, 189, 198, 209,
210, 213–18, 220, 225, 226, 262–65, 268,
269, 272, 281, 283, 285, 286, 288, 290,
292–95, 297, 298, 300, 308, 310, 318,
320, 324–26, 329

veritas aeterna
eternal truth

III/46, 62–65, 82, 83, 178, 192,
198, 231

IV/208, 211, 224

VICARIUS; VICEM OBTINERE, SUPPLERE

plaatshouder, stathouder; de plaats van
verkerijgen, bekleden
representative, deputy, vicar; to play the
part of, take the place of, represent

III/204, 234, 237, 302–5, 321, 338,
339, 345, 349, 352

vicem Dei (vice supremi entis) agere,
gerere

to act in place of God, as God's rep-
resentative or agent, in place of the
supreme being

III/15, 38–40, 65, 205, 207, 212

VIGILANTIA; VIGILARE; INVIGILARE

wakkerheid en naerstigheid; in het
waken, wakker zijn

vigilance; to be awake, watchful, look
out (for)

III/17, 18, 31, 34, 47, 68, 298, 306,
308, 325, 332, 333, 356

VINDEX; VINDICTA; VINDICARE

verdediger; wraak; wreken, verdedigen
defender; vengeance, taking vengeance;
to avenge, punish, defend, free from

III/11, 104, 188, 199, 218–20, 227,
228, 236, 242, 247, 275, 280, 289, 293,
294, 331, 342, 345

IV/207, 217, 266

VIOLATIO; VIOLARE; VIOLENS; VIOLENTER;
INVOLATUS

verbreking; overtreden; geweldig; met
geweld; ongeschonden

violation; to violate, break; violent; vio-
lently; inviolate, without infringement

III/41, 59, 74, 194, 195n, 197–99,
201, 213, 218, 220, 225, 227, 230, 239,
240, 244, 245, 271, 282, 286, 293, 294,
295, 321, 322, 330–34, 350, 355, 357

IV/288

VIRTUS

deugd, kracht

virtue, excellence, power, worth, courage

III/9, 22, 24, 26, 27, 35, 41, 46, 48,
50, 52–54, 56, 57, 68, 69, 75, 77, 83,
88, 99, 103, 111, 112, 133, 152, 155,
156, 160, 162, 163, 169, 173, 188, 190,
194, 198, 203, 213–15, 220, 224, 225,
236, 239, 243–45, 275, 279, 284, 295,
296, 299, 310, 312, 316, 320, 324, 327,
336, 353–58

IV/165, 208–10, 212–16, 218, 220–
23, 259, 264, 267, 268, 273, 285, 287,
289, 294, 298, 299, 307, 309, 319, 324

Vis

kracht, macht, ontzag, geweld

force, power, violence, strength, vigor

III/11, 18, 22, 24–26, 34, 36, 47, 49,
52, 58, 66, 73–75, 78, 81, 86, 98, 112,
114, 116, 131, 147, 163, 180, 190–92,
193, 195, 205, 206, 209, 210, 215, 224,
228–31, 235, 245, 277, 280, 281, 297,
298, 310, 313, 315, 318, 322, 337

IV/166, 169, 175, 177, 178, 180–83,
185, 204–6, 209, 211, 216–18, 249, 259,
272, 293, 296, 310, 315, 323, 325, 329

GLOSSARY-INDEX

VITA; VIVERE; VIVIDUS

leven; leven; levendig en krachtig
life, kind of life; to live; vivid

III/7-9, 11, 16, 21, 25, 29, 31, 33,
39-42, 46-48, 57, 59, 61, 62, 66, 67,
71-73, 76, 77, 79, 97, 101-4, 109, 111,
121, 122, 124-26, 128, 133, 152, 153,
155, 170, 178, 179, 185-87, 190, 191,
194-99, 201, 207, 208, 213, 215-17,
219, 221, 226, 229, 230, 238, 239, 241,
242, 245, 246, 274, 275, 277-83, 285,
286, 295-301, 305, 311, 313, 321, 324,
330-32, 335, 343, 356, 359, 360

IV/166, 171, 176, 187, 189, 190, 207,
208, 221, 216, 219, 235, 236, 242, 247, 248,
254, 259, 260, 263, 281, 283, 285, 287-92,
294, 295, 298, 314, 317, 318, 325, 330, 334

ratio vivendi, modus vivendi
way (or manner) of life, of living

III/41, 42, 46, 58, 59, 69, 78-80,
97, 162, 167, 170, 171, 177, 190,
285, 295

vita vera [= ratio bene vivendi, III/41]
true life

III/30, 41, 43-45, 48, 66, 69, 171,
177, 178

VITIUM; VITIOSUS

gebrek, zonde; bedorven

vice, defect, moral failing; defective

III/68, 118, 135, 137, 149, 217, 225,
240, 243, 273, 274, 278, 295, 303, 312,
319, 320, 353-56

IV/165, 208, 209, 213, 216, 218, 232,
247, 273, 289, 294, 295, 317, 330

VOLUNTAS; VOLITIO; VELLE

wil; willing; willen

will, desire; volition; to will (to), want
to, wish, be willing to, claim, maintain

III/9, 10, 12, 17-19, 22, 25, 33-35,
37, 39, 42, 43, 45, 52-56, 59, 62, 63,
65, 70, 71, 81-86, 89, 94, 96, 99, 101,
103, 105, 106, 108, 110, 112, 114, 119,
125, 126, 134, 137, 139, 140, 142,
144, 148-51, 154-59, 162-64, 173,
175, 176, 180, 182, 185-87, 191-95,
198, 203, 204, 206, 208, 209, 212-14,
217-22, 224, 228, 232, 234-36, 239,
243, 244, 246, 247, 273, 275, 277-84,
286, 287, 289-93, 296-98, 301, 302,
304, 307-10, 314, 315, 318-22, 325-
28, 331, 332, 338, 343-45, 349-52,
358, 359

IV/166, 167, 184-87, 191, 194,
199-201, 208, 210, 211, 215, 217, 219,
223, 229, 230, 233, 234, 236, 242,
244, 251, 252, 254-56, 258, 259, 261,
263, 265-68, 270, 272, 273, 279, 286,
289-91, 293-95, 299, 300, 304, 305,
310, 312-14, 318, 319, 323-27, 330,
331, 333, 334

VULGUS; VULGARE; VULGARIS; VULGO

't volk, 't gemeen (volk); gemeen genoech
is; gemeen; gemeenlijk

common people; to make widely known,
publish, spread, circulate; common, ordi-
nary, popular; commonly

III/6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 16, 21, 25, 29, 36,
37, 48, 59, 65, 70, 74, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84,
89, 90, 92, 93, 96, 97, 100, 105, 114-16,
129, 151, 166, 172-74, 179, 180, 183,
241, 244, 246, 319, 320, 326

IV/166, 208, 209, 211, 251, 258, 272,
300, 302, 317, 324, 328

ZADUCAE

Zaducaae, Tsadducaae

Saduceen, Zaduceen

Sadducees

III/146, 150, 159, 225

Biblical and Talmudic References

When Spinoza quotes from the Bible, I translate his Latin. I do not simply substitute the wording of some standard translation of the Bible. But I always check against the KJV and the RSV, and if there seems to be a significant difference between Spinoza's translation and those generally accepted nowadays, I try to note that fact. Where it does not seem that any distortion will be introduced, my choice of words may be guided by their choices. Where reference is made to an entire book of Scripture, rather than to a specific passage in it, the reference will be given in the Index of Proper Names.

Old Testament

Genesis 1:2, III/24, 39

2:7, III/25

2:17, III/63, 66

3:8, III/37

4:5, III/5

4:7, III/42

4:8, III/141

4:9, III/37

6:2, III/24

6:3, III/25

6:11–13, III/37

7:11, III/94

9:13, III/89

10, III/119

12:3, III/52

12:6, III/119

14:14, III/121

14: 18–20, III/48

15:8, III/30

15:1, III/48

16:9, III/29

18:19, III/38

18:21, III/38

18:24, III/38

20:6, III/18

22:11–18, III/19

22:14, III/120

26:5, III/49

28:16–19, III/160

28:20, III/131

29:35, III/130

31:13, III/131

31:29, III/37

34, III/131

35:1, III/131

35:2–3, III/39

36:31, III/122, 130

37:5–10, III/19

38:1, III/130

41:38, III/24

46:21, III/131

47:7–9, III/131

47:31, III/108

GLOSSARY-INDEX

Exodus 1:7–11, III/89

3:12, III/30

3:13, III/170

3:14, III/38

3:18, III/38

4:1, III/38

4:8, III/38

4:21, III/94

4:24, III/52

5:22–23, III/169?

6:3, III/168, 170

7:1, III/15

7:3, III/94

9:10, III/90

10:2, III/88

10:13, 19, III/90

11:8, III/33

14:21, III/90

14:27, III/90

14:29, III/75

15:10, III/90

15:11, III/39

16:27, III/230

16:34, III/121

17:14, III/122

18:11, III/39

18:23, III/208

19:4–5, III/206

19:8, III/206, 230

19:9, III/75

19:18, III/93

19:20, III/183

20:1–17, III/18

20:4–5, III/40

20:5, III/38, 183

20:18–21, III/179

20:22–23:33, III/122

21:23–25, III/103

24:3, 7, III/206

24:4, 7, III/122, 205

24:10, III/19

25:22, III/17

31:3, III/24

32, III/40

32:1–6, III/87

32:19, III/161

33:2–3, III/40

33:11, III/20, 121

33:16, III/40

33:18–23, III/19, 20n, 40

34:6, III/50

34:6–7, III/40, 171

34:7, III/42

34:14, III/183

Leviticus 5:1, III/233

18:27–28, III/55

19:17, III/27

19:17–18, III/233

24:19–20, III/103

25:30, III/136

Numbers 1:1, 2:1, III/121

6:23, III/49

7:11–12, III/132

8:17, III/218

11:17, III/28

11:14–15, III/207

11:28, III/207

12:3, III/121

12:6–8, III/20, 121

14:24, III/22

15:36, III/230

16:3, III/219

16:31–35, III/219

21:12, III/122

22:6, III/51

22:22–35, III/19

24:13, III/52

24:16, III/52

26:38–40, III/131

27:18, III/22

27:19, III/208

27:21, III/208

27:23, III/208

31:14, III/121

33:2, III/122

Deuteronomy 1:1–5, III/118, 128

1:5, III/122

2:1, 17, III/121

2:3–4, 12, III/127

3:11, III/120

4:4–7, III/44

4:6, III/26

4:7, III/49

4:8, III/44

4:12, III/183

4:15, III/181

4:19, III/39

4:24, III/100, 183

BIBLICAL AND TALMUDIC REFERENCES

4:32, III/44
 5:1–21, III/18
 5:9, III/38, 183
 5:22, III/93
 5:24–27, III/206–7
 6:4, III/181
 6:7, III/212
 7, III/126
 8:19–20, III/55
 9:6–7, III/45
 9:20, III/127
 9:26, III/121
 10:6–9, III/127
 10:8, III/218
 10:14–15, III/39
 10:15, III/44
 13:1–5, III/87, 96, 186
 13:2, III/31
 13:8–9, III/233
 16:16, III/216
 17:7, III/233
 17:9, 11, III/237
 17:11–12, III/116
 17:14, III/126
 17:16–17, III/41
 17:19, III/210
 18:15–22, III/186, 211
 18:22, III/18
 21:5, III/212
 23:6, III/52
 27:8, III/119
 27:15–26, III/119
 28:36, 68, III/126
 29:14, III/122, 123
 30:6, III/159
 30:19, III/66
 31:9, III/119, 123
 31:9–13, III/212
 31:16, 17, III/126
 31:21, III/152, 219
 31:27, III/152
 32:8–9, III/39
 32:44–34:12, III/121
 33:10, III/116
 34, III/119
 34:5, III/121
 34:6, III/121
 34:10, III/20, 121

Joshua 1:1, III/125
 1:1–9, III/208
 2:11, III/22
 5:12, III/122
 6:26, III/222
 6:27, III/124
 8:30–32, III/119
 8:35, III/124
 10:11, III/36
 10:12–13, III/92
 10:13, III/125
 10:14, III/125
 11:15, III/124
 13:22, III/53
 15:13, III/124
 15:63, III/124
 16:10, III/124
 22:10–33, III/124–25
 23:1–2, III/124
 24:10, III/52
 24:25, 26, III/123
 24:29, III/124
 24:31, III/124

Judges 1:1, III/126
 1:1–3, III/210
 1:29–30, III/124
 2:6ff., III/131, 133
 2:6–23, III/125
 2:18, III/132
 3:11, 5:31, 8:28, III/224
 3:30, III/224
 6:17, III/30
 6:34, III/24
 8:3, III/22
 13:8–20, III/19
 14:6, 19, III/24
 15:14, III/24
 15:15, III/110
 16:30, III/110
 17–21, III/134
 18:29, III/121
 21:18, III/222
 21:22, III/136

Ruth 1:1, III/126
 4:18–22, III/132

1 Samuel 3:4–9, III/18
 3:21, III/17
 7:13–14, III/133

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- 8:4-5, III/219, 321
- 9:3-10, 15-16, III/89
- 9:7-8, III/52
- 9:9, III/125
- 11:7, III/23
- 13, III/133
- 13:1, III/133, 136
- 13:15, III/208
- 14:24, III/222
- 15:3, III/220
- 15:29, III/42, 184
- 16:14, III/24
- 16:17-19, III/131
- 17:55-18:2, III/131
- 24, III/131
- 24:14, III/31
- 25:24-31, III/31
- 25:30, III/208
- 26, III/131
- 26:19, III/214-15
- 27:7, III/133
- 30:12, III/21
- 2 Samuel 5:24, III/136
- 6:2, III/136
- 7, III/129
- 7:6, III/129
- 7:10, III/129
- 8:14, III/122
- 12:30, III/120
- 13:37, III/136
- 14:15, III/138
- 14:22, III/138
- 15, III/313
- 16:23, III/138
- 19:22-23, III/207
- 24:1, III/31
- 1 Kings 3:12, III/45
- 6:1, III/132
- 7:23, III/36
- 8:27, III/183
- 10:25-11:8, III/41n
- 11:29-39, III/210
- 11:41, III/125
- 14:19, III/125
- 14:29, III/125
- 15:14, III/223
- 18:4, 13, III/225
- 20:13, III/33
- 21:10, III/94
- 22:8, III/33
- 22:19, 21, III/28, 43
- 22:23, III/31
- 22:48, III/122
- 2 Kings 1:17, III/134
- 2:11, III/93, 110
- 2:16, III/35
- 3:9, III/122
- 4:34-35, III/90
- 8:16, III/134
- 8:20, III/122
- 14:25, III/144
- 17:25ff., III/39
- 18:17, 20, 22, 32, III/129
- 20:1-11, III/30
- 20:8-12, III/36
- 21:3-9, III/217
- 25:7, III/148-49
- 25:27-30, III/126, 148
- 1 Chronicles 1:43-53, III/130
- 2:11-15, III/132
- 2:21-22, III/120
- 3:17-24, III/141
- 3:17-19, III/148
- 4:3, 8, III/146
- 6:13-15, III/146
- 8:1ff, III/131
- 9, III/141
- 9:17, III/141
- 17, III/129
- 17:5, III/129
- 17:9, III/129
- 21:16, III/19
- 23:4-5, 6, III/238
- 28:11-12, III/238
- 2 Chronicles 8:13-15, III/238
- 14:2, III/223
- 16:10, III/223
- 18:7, III/33
- 19:8, III/210
- 21:12, III/151
- 22:2, III/134
- 26:22, III/142
- 28:5-15, III/224
- 32:19, III/39
- 32:32, III/129
- 33:10, 18, 19, III/144
- 34, III/33

BIBLICAL AND TALMUDIC REFERENCES

- Ezra 1:8, III/146
- 2, III/148
- 2:2, III/146
- 2:59–63, III/148
- 2:63, III/146
- 4:12–15, III/215
- 5:14, III/146
- 7:1, III/146
- 7:6, 10, III/127
- 105:24, III/89
- 135:17, III/21
- 139:7, III/26
- 139:21–22, III/214
- 143:10, III/26
- 145:9, III/50
- 145:18, III/50
- 147:15, 18, III/89
- 148:6, III/95
- Nehemiah 1:2, III/146
- 2:64, III/147
- 5:14, III/146
- 7:5, III/147, 148
- 7:66, III/147
- 8:1–12:26, III/145
- 8:8, III/127
- 9:20, III/26
- 10:2, III/146
- 10:25, III/146
- 11:19, III/141
- 12:1, III/146
- 12:10–11, III/146
- 12:22, III/146
- 12:23, III/146
- 12:26, III/146
- 12:46–47, III/145
- 13:2, III/52
- Proverbs 1:23, III/22
- 2:3–6, III/67
- 2:9–11, III/67–68
- 13:14, III/67
- 16:22, III/41, 66, 68
- 16:32, III/22
- 24:21, III/234
- 25:1, III/142
- 25:28, III/22
- Ecclesiastes 1:9–11, III/95
- 3:19, III/23
- 3:19–21, III/87
- 7:20, III/52, 178
- 9:2–3, III/87, 229, 231
- 12:7, III/23
- Isaiah 1:1, III/142
- 1:10–17, III/69
- 1:11–20, III/33
- 6, III/20, 34
- 11:2, III/24
- 13:10, III/93
- 13:13, III/94
- 16:9, III/51
- 19:19, 20, 21, 25, III/51
- 29:10, III/22
- 30:1, III/22
- 33:11, III/22
- 36–39, III/129
- 36:5, III/129
- 38:1–8, III/30, 36
- 40:7, III/24
- 40:13, III/25
- 40:19–20, III/34
- 44:8, III/34
- 48:16, III/27
- 48:21, III/94
- 57:20, III/67
- 58:8, 14, III/71
- 63:10, III/25
- Esther 9:20–22, III/145
- 9:31[–32], III/145, 146
- 10:2, III/145
- Job 2:9, III/94
- 27:3, III/25
- 28:28, III/50, 54
- 31:12, III/101
- 32:8, III/22
- 33:4, III/26
- 34:14, III/25
- Psalms 15, III/71
- 24, III/71
- 33:6, III/26
- 33:15, III/50
- 40:6, 8, III/70
- 51:12–13, III/25
- 73, III/87
- 88, III/141
- 89, III/142
- 104:4, III/89

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- 63:11, III/26
- Jeremiah 1:5, III/51
- 7:14, III/160
- 8:8, III/161
- 9:23, III/171
- 18:8–10, III/42, 184
- 21, III/142, 143
- 21:8–10, III/143
- 22:15, III/171
- 22:24–30, III/142, 148
- 25, III/143
- 26, III/143
- 28:9, III/32
- 29:7, III/231, 233
- 31:33, III/159
- 31:35–36, III/95
- 31:36, III/55
- 32:18, III/42
- 32:31, III/217
- 34:5, III/149
- 36:2, III/143
- 37, III/143
- 38, III/143
- 45:2–51:59, III/143
- 48:31, III/51
- 48:36, III/51
- 49:7–22, III/34
- Lamentations 3:25–30, III/103
- Ezekiel 1, III/34
- 1:1–3, III/143
- 1:4, III/28
- 1:12, III/22
- 2:2, III/22
- 3:14, III/33
- 14:9, III/31
- 14:14, III/144
- 18:14–20, III/42
- 20:25, III/217, 219
- 20:32–44, III/55
- 20:38, III/56
- 21:26, III/33
- 37:9, III/23
- 37:14, III/25
- 42:16–19, III/23
- Daniel 1:7, III/146
- 3:12, III/200
- 4:8, III/24
- 6:8, III/307
- 6:15, III/200
- 7:9, III/28
- 10:14, III/35
- 12:2, III/150
- 12:8, III/34
- Hosea 8:6, III/34
- 10:5, III/160
- 13:2, III/34
- Joel 2:13, III/42
- Amos 4:11, III/23
- 5:5, III/160
- 5:21–24, III/34
- Jonah 4:2, III/50
- Micah 2:7, III/26
- Zephaniah 3:12–13, III/56
- Haggai 2:5, III/26
- Zechariah 1:9, III/34
- 4:6, III/26
- 7:12, III/26
- 14:7, III/93
- Malachi 1:6, III/223
- 1:10–11, III/49
- 2:7–8, III/273
- 2:8, III/116

Apocrypha

- 1 Maccabees 1:59–60, III/140
- 16:24, III/146

- 2 Maccabees 6:18–31, III/200

New Testament

- Matthew 2, III/32
3:16, III/28
5-7, III/156
5:28, III/70
5:4, III/103
5:17, III/103
5:39, III/103
5:40, III/232
5:43, III/233
6:33, III/103
10:1, III/233
10:19-20, III/154
10:28, III/234
12:26, III/43
13:10, III/65
18:10, III/43
24:24, III/31, 96
- Mark 10:21, III/48n
- John 1:10, III/163
1:32, III/28
9:6-7, III/90
- Acts 2:3, III/28
9:3, III/28
15:37-40, III/154
- Romans 1:11, III/153
1:13, III/154
1:20, 24-32, III/68, 198
2:25-26, III/54
3:1-2, III/54
3:5, III/42, 65
3:9, III/54
3:19-20, III/59
3:27-28, III/157
3:28, III/65, 151
3:29, III/54
4:15, III/54, 190?
6:19, III/42, 65
- 7:6, III/65
8:9, III/65
8:18, III/151
9:10, III/42
9:18, III/65, 198
9:21, III/198, 284, IV/312, 326
13:8, III/168
15:15, III/153
15:20, III/157
15:22, III/154
- 1 Corinthians 3:1-2, III/65
7:6, III/151
7:25, III/152
7:40, III/151, 155
9:19-23, III/54, 88, 158
10:15, III/152
14:6, III/151, 155
16:12, III/154
- 2 Corinthians 3:3, III/162, 222
- Galatians 2:11, III/158
5:22, III/80, 187
- 1 Timothy 2:7, III/156
- 2 Timothy 1:11, III/156
- Philemon 8, III/156
- Hebrews 11:21, III/108
- James 2:17, 18, III/175
2:24, III/157
- 2 Peter 2:15-16, III/52
- I John 2:3-4, III/176
4:7-8, III/175
4:12-16, III/171,
4:13, III/3, 175, 176, IV/318a
- Jude 11, III/52

GLOSSARY-INDEX

The Talmud

On the Sabbath I/13b, II/30b, 150,
III/41, 150

Of the Scribes 6, III/140

Baba Bathra 14b, 15a, III/118n, 144n

Index of Proper Names

- Aaron III/15, 87, 208, 209, 234
 Abigail III/31
 Abimelech III/18, 51, 132
 Abraham III/19, 30, 37, 48, 49, 119, 120, 169
 Abraham ben David, R., III/150
 Adam III/37, 61, 63, 66
 Aesop IV/175
 Ahab III/31, 33, 43
 Alfakhar, R. Jehuda III/19n, 181, 182
 Alexander the Great III/6, 96, 204, 213, 299n
 Ambrosius III/228
 Amsterdam III/246
 Aquinas III/11n, 86n
 Aram III/43
 Ariosto III/110n
 Aristotle III/80, 114, 168; IV/261
 Asa III/223
 Asaph III/87
 Augustine III/86n
 Augustus III/204
 Auzoutus, IV/168

 Babylon (*see also* rex Babiloniae) III/141, 233
 Bacon (Verulam) IV/189
 Balaam III/19, 51, 52
 Bomberg Bible III/139
 Boyle IV/164, 167, 169, 176, 177, 276

 Cain III/33, 37, 42, 43
 Calvin III/6n, 8n, 9n, 66n, 99n, 112n
 Canaan III/119
 Christ III/21, 28, 31, 32, 54, 64, 65, 68, 70, 71, 76, 90, 103, 104, 152, 154–58, 163, 164, 166, 172, 178, 225, 233, 234, 289
 Chronicles III/134, 141, 149
 Cleon III/204
Cogitata metaphysica IV/268
 Colbert IV/302
 Colerus III/172n
 Costa, Uriel da III/23n, 150n
 Counterremonstrants III/246
 Curtius, Quintus III/6, 204, 213, 299

 Cushan-rishathaim III/132, 133
 Cyrus III/141

 Darius, III/213
 David III/19, 31, 39, 120, 131, 132, 136, 207, 214, 220, 238, 313
 Daniel III/40, 144–46, 200
 Darda III/29
 Democritus IV/261, 262
 Descartes III/30n, 31n, 58n, 62n, 89n, 93n, 102n, IV/166, 167, 168, 174, 177, 193, 197, 220, 267–69, 332, 333
Descartes' Principles III/84, IV/167, 181, 199, 302
 Deuteronomy III/127, 128
 Dinah, III/131

 Ecclesiastes, III/41, 142, 150
 English, the IV/175
 Egypt III/40
 Eleazar III/200, 208, 209
 Eli III/17
 Elijah III/35, 93, 110, 151
 Elisha III/35, 90
 Enoch III/51
 Epicurus IV/261
 Esther III/145, 146
Ethics III/275, 276, 284
 IV/268, 271, 277–80, 302, 334
 Euclid III/111, IV/261
 Eusebius III, 110n
 Ezekiel III/33, 40, 143, 150, 154
 Ezra III/126–29, 130, 132, 140, 141, 145, 146, 148, 149

 Ferdinand (King of Spain) III/56, 322

 Genesis III/149, 170
 Gersonides (Rabbi Levi ben Gerson) III/132
 Gideon III/24, 30, 132, 212

 Hagar III/29
 Halevi III/169n
 Hanani III/223
 Hananiah III/32

GLOSSARY-INDEX

- Hananiaš III/41
Hannibal III/295
Hebrews III/110
Heman III/29
Hevelius, IV/165, 168
Hezekiah III/30
Hobbes III/16n, 43n, 59n, 73n, 106n, 121n, 144n, 167n, 195n
Hollanders III/344, IV/175
Horace III/8n
Hosea III/143
Huet III/141n, 142n, IV/331, 335
Huyghens IV/165, 166, 168, 174, 177, 301, 302, 305

Ibn Ezra III/15n, 39, 53n, 66n, 119, 118–20, 122n, 126n, 130n, 131, 132n, 144–46, 169n
Isaac III/169
Isaiah III/40, 129, 142, 154
Israel III/39

Jacob III/39, 130, 131, 169
James III/157
Jarghi, R. Salomo III/15 [= R. Solomon ben Isaac]
Jeconiaš [= Jehoiakin] III/141, 148, 149
Jehoiakim III/143
Jehoiakin III/141, 142
Jehova III/18
Jephtha III/132
Jeremiah III/103, 104, 142, 143, 151, 154, 233
Jeroboam III/210
Jerusalem III/32, 33, 39, 210, 215, 224
Jethro III/39
Job III/50, 110, 144
John III/174n, 175n
Jonah III/41, 144, 153
Jonathan (Chaldean paraphrast) III/123
Joseph (the son of Jacob) III/19, 24, 130, 131
Joseph (the son of Shem Tob) III/80
Josephus III/42, 49n, 96, 118n, 132, 133, 140, 143, 146, 223
Joshua III/117, 123–26, 128, 132, 133, 207–11
Judaea III/49
Judah III/130
Judges III/125, 126, 128

Kalchol III/29
Kepler IV/176
Kimchi III/136
Kings III/117, 125, 126, 128, 134
Kircher, Athanasius, III/164, 166, 167

Laban III/37
Leibniz IV/302, 303, 305, 331
Leicester III/228
Leo Hebraeus 168n, 170n
Letter 12 IV/331, 332
Levi, III/131
Livy, III/353
Lucas III/48n
Lucretius III/5n, IV/261
Luther III/99n, 121n

Maccabee, Judas III/141, 146
Machiavelli III/296, 353
Mahomet/Mahumet/Mahumed, IV/218, 225, 226, 322
Maimonides III/16n, 17n, 18n, 19n, 20n, 21n, 29n, 33n, 42n, 43n, 62n, 66n, 78n, 79, 80, 89n, 93n, 94n, 95n, 101n, 109n, 113–16, 118n, 150, 150n, 158n, 181, 184
Manasseh, III/217
Manasseh ben Israel III/9n, 18n, 19n, 23n, 31n, 42n, 131n, 133n, 134n, 136n, 142n, 146n, 147n, 148n, 168n, 169n, 170n, 181n, 183n
Manoa III/19
Manuel I (King of Portugal) III/56
Melchizedek III/48, 49
Meyer III/15n, 45n, 102n, 181n, 184n
Micaiah III/28, 31, 33, 43
Morteira, Saul III/55n
Moses III/10, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 27, 30, 31, 33, 38–40, 44, 52, 53, 64, 70, 75, 79, 87, 100, 101, 104, 105, 113, 118–27, 132, 144, 150–54, 159, 161, 163, 168–71, 174, 186, 201, 203, 205–11, 213, 219, 222, 230, 234, 237, 238
Mount Sinai III/179, 183
Munster, Bishop of, IV/175

Nahum III/33
Nebuchadnezzar III/23, 24, 33, 200

INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

- Nehemiah III/145, 146
 Noah III/37, 51, 79, 89
- Obadiah III/225
 Oldenburg IV/276
 Orange, Prince of IV/175
 Orlando furioso III/110
 Ovid III/110, IV/266n
- Palestine III/37
 Paul III/28, 54, 59, 65, 68, 80, 88, 151, 153, 154, 157, 158, 160n, 168, 169, 174n, 178n, 187, 190, 198
 Persians III/221
 Perseus III/110
 Pharaoh III/15, 24, 33
 Philo Judaeus III/66n, 118n, 141, 142, 146
 Pilate III/225
 Plato III/168, IV/261
 Pliny (the Elder) III/28n
 Proverbs III/150
- Quintus Curtius III/6, 7n
- Rashi (R. Shelomo Yitschaki) III/149
 Rehoboam III/210
 Remonstrants III/246
 Jan Rieuwerts IV/265
 Romans III/153
 Royal Society IV/164, 174
 Ruth III/117, 126, 128
- Sallust, III/309
 Samson III/24, 110, 132, 212
 Samuel III/17, 132, 133, 212, 220
 Satan III/43, 144
- Saul III/24, 39, 42, 133, 134, 214, 220
 Seder Olam III/130n, 131n, 147n, 150n
 Seneca III/74, 194
 Septuagint III/141
 Serrarius IV/167
 Sextus Empiricus IV/260
 Simeon, III/131
 Socrates IV/261
 Solomon III/23, 29, 36, 41, 45, 66–68, 72, 87, 132, 224, 229, 231, 234, 238
- Tacitus III/5n, 6n, 7n, 12n, 56n, 204, 215, 218, 314, 316
 Talmud III/138, 139, 146, 150
 Tamar III/130
 Terence III/5n, 12n, 75n, 104n, 111n, 148n, 159n, 180n, 187n, 188n
 Thales IV/228
 Theodosius III/228
Theological-Political Treatise III/276, 345
 IV/166, 167, 276, 301, 303, 331, 335
 Torquatus, Manlius III/232
Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect IV/268n
 Tremellius III/68, 151
 Tschirnhaus IV/274, 276, 301–4
- Ulysses III/307
- Vespasian III/204, 215
 Vitellius III/204
 Voetius IV/220
 Vossius IV/196
- Zedekiah III/142, 143, 148, 149
 Zerubbabel III/141

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- In 1987 Carl Winter published a fifth volume, containing no additional works of Spinoza's, but making available an extremely useful

2. Or rather: nearly complete. Since Gebhardt first published there have been some additions to the correspondence: Letter 12A (translated in *Collected Works*, I, 206); a new fragment of Letter 30 (translated in this volume, pp. 12–14); and Letter 48A, a very long letter from Jelles to Spinoza (discussed above on pp. 367–68; excerpts translated pp. 398–403). As of this date (29 November 2014) three volumes have been published in the PUF edition: ALM, MBG, and PR.

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Correlation of the ALM and Bruder Paragraph Numbers in the Theological-Political Treatise (TTP)

For the convenience of readers who may need to follow references in the secondary literature using the paragraphing adopted by ALM or check my translation against their text or translation-, I offer this correlation between the ALM and the Bruder paragraphing. For the most part, paragraph divisions in ALM correspond to those in Bruder, although generally Bruder has more paragraph divisions than does ALM. In some cases, an ALM paragraph break appears part way through a Bruder paragraph. For these, I end that Bruder reference with the same paragraph number with which the next reference begins. So in the correlation for the Preface to the TTP, where ALM13 ends with B31, and ALM14 begins with B31, the division between paragraphs 13 and 14 of ALM occurs within Bruder paragraph 31.

TTP Preface: ALM1 = B1; ALM2 = B2-3; ALM3 = B4; ALM4 = B5-6; ALM5 = B7-8; ALM6 = B9; ALM7 = B10-11; ALM8 = B12-13; ALM9 = B14-19; ALM10 = B20-26; ALM11 = B27; ALM12 = B28; ALM13 = B29-31; ALM14 = B31-32; ALM15 = B33-34; ALM16 = B35.

B13-15; ALM8 = B16-18; ALM9 = B19; ALM 10 = B20; ALM11 = B21-23; ALM12 = B23-24; ALM13 = B25-31; ALM14 = B32-41; ALM15 = B41-48; ALM16 = B48; ALM17 = B49; ALM18 = B50-51; ALM19 = B52-57; ALM20 = B58.

TTP I: ALM1 = B1; ALM2 = B2-3; ALM3 = B4; ALM4 = B5; ALM5 = B6; ALM6 = B7-8; ALM7 = B9; ALM8 = B10; ALM9 = B11; ALM10 = B12; ALM11 = B13-14; ALM12 = B15-16; ALM13 = B17-18; ALM14 = B19; ALM15-16 = B20; ALM17 = B21; ALM18 = B22-23; ALM19 = B24; ALM20-21 = B25; ALM22 = B26-28; ALM23 = B29-30; ALM24 = B31; ALM25 = B32-39; ALM26 = B40-42; ALM27 = B43-44; ALM28 = B45; ALM29 = B46; ALM30 = B47; ALM31 = B48.

TTP III: ALM1 = B1-5; ALM2 = B6; ALM3 = B7-11; ALM4 = B11; ALM5 = B12-15; ALM6 = B16-22; ALM 7 = B22-29; ALM8 = B30-34.5; ALM9 = 34.6-39; ALM10 = B40-46; ALM11 = B47-52; ALM12 = B53-56; ALM13 = B57.

TTP IV: ALM 1 = B1-4; ALM2 = B5-8; ALM3 = B9; ALM4 = B10-13; ALM5 = B14-17; ALM6 = B18-21; ALM7 = B22; ALM8 = B23-25; ALM9 = B26-30; ALM10 = B31-37; ALM11 = B38-39; ALM12 = B40-50.

TTP II: ALM1 = B1-2; ALM2 = B3; ALM3 = B4-7; ALM4 = B8-9; ALM5 = B10-11; ALM6 = B12; ALM7 =

TTP V: ALM1 = B1-3; ALM2 = B4-5; ALM3 = B6-9; ALM4 = B10-12; ALM5 = B13-16; ALM6 = B17; ALM7 = B18-20; ALM8 = B20-22;

CORRELATION OF THE ALM AND BRUDER PARAGRAPH

ALM9 = B23-25; ALM10 = B26-28;
ALM11 = B29-30; ALM12 = B31;
ALM13 = B32-34; ALM14 = B35-37;
ALM15 = B38; ALM16 = B38-41;
ALM17 = B41-43; ALM18 = B44;
ALM19 = B45-49; ALM20 = B50.

TTP VI: ALM1 = B1-5; ALM2 = B6;
ALM3 = B7-9; ALM4 = B10-12;
ALM5 = B13-15; ALM6 = B16-19;
ALM7 = B20-23; ALM8 = B24-26;
ALM9 = B27-29; ALM10 = B30-34;
ALM11 = B35-38; ALM12 = B39-40;
ALM13 = B41-44; ALM14 = B45-48;
ALM15 = B49-51; ALM16 = B52;
ALM17 = B53-54; ALM18 = B55-56;
ALM19 = B56-58; ALM20 = B59-64;
ALM21 = B65-66; ALM22 = B67-70;
ALM23 = B71-72.

TTP VII: ALM1 = B1-5; ALM2 = B6-8;
ALM3 = B9-10; ALM4 = B11-13;
ALM5 = B14-25; ALM6 = B26-28;
ALM7 = B29-34; ALM8 = B34-37;
ALM9 = B38-43; ALM10 = B43-44;
ALM11 = B44-46; ALM12 = B47-50;
ALM13 = B51-55; ALM14 = B56-57;
ALM15 = B58-63; ALM16 = B64;
ALM17 = B65-69; ALM18 = B69-70;
ALM19 = B71-74; ALM20 = B75-82;
ALM21 = B83-87; ALM22 = B88-94.

TTP VIII: ALM1 = B1-2; ALM2 = B3;
ALM3 = B4-13; ALM4 = B14-19;
ALM5 = B20-30; ALM6 = B31-33;
ALM7 = B33-38; ALM8 = B39;
ALM9 = B40; ALM10 = B41; ALM11 = B42-46;
ALM12 = B47-58.

TTP IX: ALM1 = B1-3; ALM2 = B4-7;
ALM3 = B7-11; ALM4 = B12;
ALM5 = B13; ALM6 = B14-15;
ALM7 = B16-17; ALM8 = B18-20;
ALM9 = B20-24; ALM10 = B24-26;
ALM11 = B27-29; ALM12 = B30-32;
ALM13 = B32-34; ALM14 = B35-36;
ALM15 = B37-38; ALM16 = B39-41;
ALM17 = B41-43; ALM18 = B44-48;

ALM19 = B49-52; ALM20 = B53-61;
ALM21 = B62-63.

TTP X: ALM1 = B1-2; ALM2 = B3;
ALM3 = B4-5; ALM4 = B6-8; ALM5 = B9-11;
ALM6 = B12-13; ALM7 = B14-15;
ALM8 = B16-18; ALM9 = B19-21;
ALM10 = B21-25; ALM11 = B26-30;
ALM12 = B30-31; ALM13 = B31-36;
ALM14 = B37-38; ALM15 = B39-41;
ALM16 = B42; ALM17 = B43-47;
ALM18 = B48.

TTP XI: ALM1 = B1-3; ALM2 = B3-4;
ALM3 = B5-7; ALM4 = B7-8; ALM5 = B9-11;
ALM6 = B12-13; ALM7 = B14-17;
ALM8 = B18-20; ALM9 = B21; ALM10 = B22-24.

TTP XII: ALM1 = B1-2; ALM2 = B3-4;
ALM3 = B5-7; ALM4 = B8; ALM5 = B9-12;
ALM6 = B12-17; ALM7 = B18-22;
ALM8 = B23-25; ALM9 = B26-31;
ALM10 = B32-35; ALM11 = B36-38;
ALM12 = B38-40.

TTP XIII: ALM1 = B1-4; ALM2 = B4-5;
ALM3 = B6-8; ALM4 = B9; ALM5 = B10-16;
ALM6 = B17; ALM7 = B18-19; ALM8 = B20-24;
ALM9 = B25-29.

TTP XIV: ALM1 = B1-4; ALM2 = B5;
ALM3 = B5-10; ALM4 = B11-12;
ALM5 = B13; ALM6 = B14; ALM7 = B14-19;
ALM8 = B20-21; ALM9 = B22-24;
ALM10 = B24-28; ALM11 = B29-34;
ALM12 = B35-36; ALM13 = B37-39;
ALM14 = B40.

TTP XV: ALM1 = B1-3; ALM2 = B4-7;
ALM3 = B8-12; ALM4 = B13-15;
ALM5 = B18-20; ALM6 = B21-25;
ALM7 = B26-37; ALM8 = B38-42;
ALM9 = B43; ALM10 = B44-45.

TTP XVI: ALM1 = B1; ALM2 = B2-6;
ALM3 = B7-8; ALM4 = B9-11;

CORRELATION OF THE ALM AND BRUDER PARAGRAPH

ALM5 = B12-14; ALM6 = B15-19;
ALM7 = B20-24; ALM8 = B25-27;
ALM9 = B28-31; ALM10 = B32-35;
ALM11 = B36-38; ALM12 = B39;
ALM13 = B40; ALM14 = B41; ALM
15 = B42; ALM16 = B43-46; ALM17
= B47; ALM18 = B48-54; ALM19 =
B52-56; ALM20 = B57-60; ALM21
= B61-63; ALM22 = B64-67.

TTP XVII: ALM1 = B1-4; ALM2 =
B5-10; ALM3 = B11-12; ALM4 =
B13-17; ALM5 = B18-19; ALM6 =
B20-25; ALM7 = B26-29; ALM8 =
B30-32; ALM9 = B33-37; ALM10 =
B38-42; ALM11 = B42-44; ALM12
= B45-47; ALM13 = B48; ALM14 =
B49-57; ALM15 = B58-61; ALM16
= B62; ALM17 = B63-65; ALM18 =
B66-69; ALM19 = B70; ALM20 =
B71-72; ALM21 = B73; ALM22 =
B74-75; ALM23 = B76-81; ALM24
= B82-83; ALM25 = B84-92; ALM26
= B93-100; ALM27 = B101-102;
ALM28 = B103-105; ALM29 =
B106-111; ALM30 = B112-114;
ALM31 = B115.

TTP XVIII: ALM1 = B1-3; ALM2 =
B3-5; ALM3 = B6; ALM4 = B6-17;
ALM5 = B18-21; ALM6 = B22-29;
ALM7 = B30-32; ALM8 = B33-34;
ALM9 = B35; ALM10 = B36-37.

TTP XIX: ALM1 = B1-2; ALM2 = B2;
ALM3 = B3-6; ALM4 = B7-8; ALM5
= B9-10; ALM6 = B10-16; ALM7
= B17; ALM8 = B18-20; ALM9
= B21; ALM10 = B22-24; ALM11 =
B25-27; ALM12 = B28-30; ALM13
= B31-33; ALM14 = B34-38; ALM15
= B39; ALM16 = B40-42; ALM17
= B43-44; ALM18 = B45; ALM19
= B46-49; ALM20 = B50-54; ALM21
= B55-59; ALM22 = B59-62.

TTP XX: ALM1 = B1-3; ALM2 = B4-5;
ALM3 = B6-7; ALM4 = B8-9; ALM5
= B10; ALM6 = B11-12; ALM7 =
B7-15; ALM8 = B16-19; ALM9 =
B20-23; ALM10 = B24-26; ALM11
= B27-30; ALM12 = B31-33; ALM13
= B34-36; ALM14 = B37-38; ALM15
= B39-42; ALM16 = B43-45; ALM17
= B46; ALM18 = B47.